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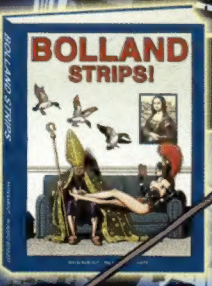

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#185 JUNE 2005

Inside this issue

COVER: Obviously muscling up in the face of a strong wave of competition from Marvel product, DC takes advantage of its big screen exposure with an image makeover and the launch of its all star All Star line with Frank Miller and Jim Lee's back-to-basics take on the early days of Batman and Robin. For the full story, see page 16.

News

NEWS INTERNATIONAL: **New Avengers** writer ushers in big changes for Marvel Universe... **Stray Bullets** creator tackles Daredevil and Punisher... Kurt Busiek transforms **Marvels** sequel into **Astro City** series... Image co-founder introduces new superheroine... **Gravity** lifts off for *Marvel Next*... Valiant bidder loses out at last minute... **Danger Girl** creator introduces new squad of super-youths... **Strange Girl** comes to Image... UK newsstand weekly gets red card... **New Warriors** resurface at Marvel... Devil's Due relaunches **G.I. Joe**... British indie creator teams up with former **X-Men** writer... ibooks revives **Magnus, Robot Fighter**... UK small press publisher relaunches **O Men**... plus much more. .. **5**

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Sez Dez

Editorial
Dez Skinn

GIVEN the appropriate timing of the typing of this, there's a subject I can't resist leaping into.

Of course, it's sod's law that last month, for the first time in 26 years of *Sez Dez* editorials (gasp!), I wrote a "To Be Continued" column. Any other time I could move into a new subject without hesitation, so first an apology if you were waiting with bated breath to find the answer to the 1983 question posed by a printer that I signed off with. We'll get back to that. But this time my specialist subject is conventions.

Yesterday I drove back from Bristol, from the first official Area 51 and Comics International organised Comic Expo. OK, we'd done a beta test last November, but this was the real thing, a full 12 months since the last Bristol Comic Festival had taken place.

Full reports have yet to come in, but everybody I spoke to had a great time. We had probably more guests than had been seen on this side of the Atlantic for over a decade and a record attendence to such a point we had to reprint the tickets when stocks ran out!

Others can determine its credibility, on web-sites and in letters columns in coming weeks. I've brought up the subject of such gatherings for a different reason, that of their future.

Ever wondered why mainland Europe's events are much better attended and better supported than our own? Here's one possible reason...

It's only in the UK where there are weekend festivals, conventions, UKCACs, Expos. Everywhere else they're three, four of even five day events. For guests and exhibitors, that makes it worth getting out of bed.

Consider the guests, with some living halfway around the world. It's crazy to spend two days travelling for a two-day event. It's equally crazy to assemble huge intricate stands and masses of stock for two-day events. Fans may not stay the whole time, but the flow-through multiplies immensely. And not just fans attend. With weekdays included in the shows, it's not unusual to see the under 30s (yes, under 30s) there. In fact, whole coach parties of school kids turn up, as part of their course work.

Taking it one step at a time, our intent is to leave the spring Bristol show as it is. It ain't broke. But with Brighton in November, we're looking at a far higher profile, costs alone being as much as the last six Bristol events combined. So as well as the blanket publicity, from motorway RAC signs to a giveaway 20,000 print run comic to be distributed around the bars and cafes of Sussex weeks before the event, we're aiming to attract a far wider range of exhibitors and creators. And we're doing this by bolting on a three-day event immediately before the Expo, a Wednesday to Friday fully-fledged ProCon.

There are ads for the ProCon and Expo websites inside this issue, so you can follow our progress there, or link through from our brand new QCL website <*www.qualitycommunications.com*>. Flushed with the success of Bristol, we're now ready to up the ante and make the UK into a world player once more.

As always, your input is eagerly awaited.

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Preview showings include: Hayao Miyazaki's "Howl's Moving Castle"
For full information & listings see www.interaction.worldcon.org.uk

Scarlet Witch brings major changes to Marvel Universe

Secret War *writer moves on to eight-part crossover leading on from events he revealed in* Avengers Disassembled

MARVEL is embarking on its most ambitious crossover since *Heroes Reborn* and promising changes more far-reaching and permanent than those resulting from the 1996 extravaganza.

Sharing more in common with 1995's *Age of Apocalypse* event but encompassing the entire Marvel Universe rather than just its mutant quarter, the enigmatically titled **House of M** centres on Wanda Maximoff aka the Scarlet Witch as she abuses her powers in an attempt to warp reality to her satisfaction. Across its eight biweekly issues, it chronicles how Charles Xavier rallies the X-Men, the Avengers and other Marvel heroes to prevent her making fatal changes.

"When we open up on **House of M**," writer Brian Michael Bendis explained, "here's Wanda constantly playing with reality like a band-aid, just trying to make herself happy in her own little room and Xavier trying to stop her from doing it because the consequences of her actions are too much for the world to take. Every time he does, it just reminds her of what she's done to the Avengers. She has moments of clarity. It's just getting worse and worse. You can see that holding her down mentally is taking every bit of energy Xavier has. It's more than he can handle."

Editor Tom Brevoort told **CI** the miniseries follows on from the final **Avengers** storyline. However, as he explained, it was not part of the original plan. "**House of M** springboards out of the events of *Avengers Disassembled*, but wasn't specifically in mind when we did that story. We knew we'd left the situation with Wanda and Magneto up in the air at the end of *Disassembled* and we knew we'd get back to it – just not precisely when or how. But when we were at one of our editorial retreats, the situation came up again and enough people tossed out enough different ideas that we found we had the makings of something larger than just an **Avengers** story."

> ***"...the worst mutant threat ever. Wanda's not a villainess so much as a tragic figure"***
> *...Brian Michael Bendis, writer*

For his part, Bendis, who closed the book on **Avengers** to relaunch the title as **New Avengers**, commented, "After *Disassembled* was done, I started riffing about what had happened and what could happen next. It dawned on me that what we have here is the worst mutant threat ever. Wanda's not a villainess so much as a tragic figure. She's Xavier's worst nightmare. She's Magneto's worst nightmare. She's the Avengers worst nightmare. She represents everything that could go wrong, everything that they built their lives towards creating or protecting, it could all go away and it's not getting any better. Xavier is desperately trying to work with her, but it's not working. He just doesn't have enough power to stop her from doing this stuff."

Asked if the alternate realities aspect of the crossover made it nothing more than a blockbuster 21st century version of Marvel's popular but now defunct parallel worlds title, Brevoort retorted, "**House of M** is not a **What If...?** story, it's a *What Is* story – these are the characters you know and have been reading about for decades and any changes or transformations that they experience during **House of M** will affect them long term.

"In terms of who did what, whenever possible, the creators working on the actual characters wrote the tie-in issues," the editor added. "In the case of **Iron Man**, we're experiencing enough delays in terms of producing Adi Granov's artwork that doing an **HoM** tie-in within the main series didn't make sense. Similarly, JMS was just beginning his run on **Fantastic Four** when **House of M** was slated to start, and it didn't seem fair to ask him to start off his series with a tie-in. So in cases such as those, we opted to do separate standalone miniseries.

"There were a wealth of possibilities in the **HoM** concept, much of which Brian only got to touch the surface of in the core eight-issue series, so there was plenty of space for tie-ins that would embellish, enlighten and expand on what was already there in a logical way and contribute to the overall reading experience in a cumulative way," the editor concluded.

Bendis, who recently wrote **Secret War**, another crossover, is joined on **House of M** by former **Legion of Super-Heroes** artist Olivier Coipel.

***House of M #1**, priced $2.99, ships on June 1.*

*Above: An Olivier Coipel interior page from **House of M #1** [above]. Below: Essad Ribic promo art for the eight-issue Marvel crossover.*

Scrapped sequel leads to Dark Age

THE ABORTED sequel to **Marvels**, Kurt Busiek and artist Alex Ross's award-winning 1994 Marvel four-parter, has become the basis for the writer's latest **Astro City** project for WildStorm.

Speaking to **CI** about **The Dark Age**, Busiek said, "It's about a dark time in Astro City in the 1970s and, more particularly, about two brothers – one a cop, one a petty crook – trying to get by, to deal with life, their past, and the tumultuous world around them, as both they and the world go through some big changes.

"As for the origin of the idea – well, it's been a part of **Astro City** from very early on, since it was early in the process of working up **Astro City** that I wound up walking away from the sequel to **Marvels** that we were developing at the time. I kept the story, knowing I'd like to do it sometime down the line, and this is where I finally get to do it."

Ever-shifting past

Originally lined up to launch last December, the 16-parter is illustrated by **Astro City** regular Brent Anderson. Its 1970s setting is basically because, as the writer explained, "It's the decade I was a teenager in, so it's when I really started to pay attention to the world and I think that time in someone's life is always interesting to them.That said, **The Dark Age** is set in the '70s largely because of the book's roots as **Marvels II**, which would have been set in the '70s. The story was worked out around the political and social changes of that decade, so in shifting it over to **Astro City**, I kept the time period – and actually got to make more use of it, since thanks to 'Marvel time,' Marvel history is always set in a hazy, ever-shifting past that slides forward from its original era and, with **Astro City**, we could make it the actual '70s. So we get Nixon and Vietnam and Watergate and more, along with the superhero antics.

"The Dark Age is about that era of history, a time things went sour and why they did," Busiek added. "As for main themes – brotherhood, family, obsession, revenge – that'll do for a start."

Pictured: Alex Ross's cover art for the first two issues [#2 above] of WildStorm's 16-issue ***Astro City: The Dark Age****.*

***Astro City: The Dark Age** #1, priced $2.99, ships on June 22.*

Stray Bullets creator prolongs Marvel feud

IT TOOK David Lapham almost a year to produce **Stray Bullets** #33 but the writer/artist has certainly knuckled down to his day job since that latest issue of his acclaimed El Capitan crime comic appeared in May 2004.

Citing the joys of being a first-time father as the reason for his drop in productivity, Lapham has subsequently worked on a four-issue **Darkness** story for Image/Top Cow and is currently halfway through writing and laying out *City of Crime,* a serial running through **Detective Comics** #801-812. The one-time Jim Shooter protege is now adding a Marvel six-parter that is to run concurrent with the last half of his DC 12-parter.

Written and drawn by Lapham, **Daredevil vs Punisher** is the latest in a long line of clashes between the two Marvel heroes. "This is a classic match up of two guys whose ideology is so opposed there's no way they could ever be anything but enemies," the writer/artist, whose credits include **Shadowman** for Valiant and Defiant's **Warriors of Plasm**, told **CI**. "Daredevil does not kill. It's his line. For him it's what separated good from evil. The Punisher thinks not killing is a waste of time. It's his line."

Pictured: David Lapham art from the cover to ***Daredevil vs Punisher*** *#1. The $2.99 Marvel six-parter launches on July 6.*

Amateurish idiot

"He won't kill the innocent or law enforcement but if you're evil, you have got to go," he explained. "To not eliminate the enemy makes you responsible for whatever bad deeds they commit in the future. To the Punisher, Daredevil's an idiot and an amateur, he's as big a threat to the public's safety as the criminals he's fighting."

Describing how the project came about, Lapham continued, "There's a part in the first issue where the Punisher tries to talk himself into justifying killing Daredevil. This conflict's established from back during Frank Miller's famous run on the book [**Daredevil**], so when Marvel approached me about possibly doing a Punisher project, the idea of clashing with Daredevil was the first thing that came to my mind. I though it was an idea I could expand on and intensify.

"At first, with all my **Stray Bullets** work, I'd only committed to writing and doing breakdowns on the project, but somehow I ended up doing all the pencilling and inking myself," he added. "It's been fun, it's been great, but I have no idea how it happened... I guess I figured I don't need to sleep any more."

Set in Manhattan and Hell's Kitchen, the six-parter also features the mobster Hammerhead and his right-hand man – an old Punisher nemesis, who now calls himself The Professor . They have stepped into the void left by the Kingpin and are trying to unite the mobs. "The Punisher wants to keep the chaos, keep the underworld divided and weak and he becomes hell bent on assassinating anyone trying to step into the Kingpin's shoes."

Lapham, who says a tale of Martin – an innocent caught in the crossfire between the heroes and the villains – runs parallel to the superhero story, added, "First and foremost I'm trying to tell a story that kicks ass. Let nothing get in the way of two guys who hate each other's guts and want to beat each other senseless every time they see each other.

"Beyond that, it's really a story that contrasts the two vigilante styles and the repercussions of those styles, which we see played out in young Martin's character," he concluded.

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HIS STAR has dimmed considerably since the heady days of the early 1990s when his name could push sales of a comic to over a million. But Image co-founder Rob Liefeld can still generate publicity as Marvel proved last year when it brought him back to draw an ***X-Force*** *mini, reuniting him with the team he co-created. Now he is going back to drawing DC's Hawk and Dove – the superheroes that launched his career – as he and writer Gail Simone fill in with a two-parter that begins in August's* ***Teen Titans*** *#27 [cover above].*

Marvel gains Gravity

GREG Willis is the latest addition to the *Marvel Next* roster of new young heroes.

Developed by Sean McKeever a year before Marvel set up the promotional umbrella banner , in **Gravity** he joins a title line-up that already features **X-23**, **Young Avengers**, **Runaways**, **Araña**, **Livewires**, **Spellbinders** and **Machine Teen**.

"The gist of **Gravity** is that a teenager from the Midwest with superpowers graduates from high school and decides to attend college in New York City so he can try his hand at becoming the next big superhero," McKeever, who created Slave Labor's **The Waiting Place**, told **CI**. "So on one hand, it's a straightforward superhero serial set smack dab in the middle of the Marvel Universe but at the same time it delves into what it means to become an adult and that naiveté we all go through at that young age.

"My reason for wanting to tell these types of stories is because that journey into adulthood is something we grownups have all been through and can identify with and it's something that teens are keen to speculate on and fantasise about as well. Really, you spend your school years just waiting for the moment when you're finally free to do what you want. It's a milieu with a pretty wide appeal as it is, so when you toss in crazy superheroics, everything gets kicked up a notch," the writer added.

Gravity is pencilled by Mike Norton, whose credits include **The Night Club** for Image and Oni's **Queen & Country** as well as **The Waiting Place**.

Above: Mike Norton cover art for the second issue of Marvel Next's ***Gravity****, a $2.99 five-parter that launches on June 8.*

Blacklight for Image

OUSTED from his post as Image Comics publisher in February 2004, **Guardians of the Galaxy**'s Jim Valentino subsequently returned to creating comics.

Since being replaced by Erik Larsen, the Image co-founder has produced the **normalman 20th Anniversary Special** #1, revived **ShadowHawk** *[see below]* and kicked off **The Pact**, a four-parter starring ShadowHawk alongside Jay Faerber's Zephyr, Phil Hester's Firebreather and Robert Kirkman's Invincible. He is now moving beyond existing properties with the introduction of Lina Juarez aka Blacklight.

As with his new **ShadowHawk** title, Valentino is only plotting **Blacklight**, which is being written by **Micronauts**' Scott Wherle.

Asked for the high concept pitch for the ongoing Image series, Valentino told **CI**, "sometimes change is forced upon us... even when we're afraid of the consequences."

He said the concept was inspired by a good friend of his, who is stuck in a life she is unhappy with but does not have the courage to change it. "I guess it could be seen in much the same way as a mother bird tossing a chick out of the nest. In this case, it is the acquisition of the powers that pushes her into action."

Valentino says he sees the theme of the series – which is drawn by newcomers John Toledo and Marc Deering – as self-discovery and personal liberation,

He added that he is interested in "things that actually examine why we do or do not do the things that we do.

"I also tend to create characters that are disenfranchised, displaced. That probably says more about me than I want to know or admit," he concluded with a laugh.

Above: The cover to the second issue of ***Blacklight****; art by John Toledo and Marc Deering. The $2.99 Image series launches in June.*

ShadowHawk a la Moore

JIM VALENTINO is relaunching **ShadowHawk** with an Alan Moore story as its foundation.

Plotted by the former Image publisher, the monthly stars Eddie Collins, who Valentino introduced in 2004's **Return of ShadowHawk** special.

"Eddie is the reincarnation of the original Shaman as told in the Alan Moore story for the [1995] **ShadowHawks of Legend** one-shot," Valentino explained to **CI**. "The conceit is that there have been ShadowHawks throughout the ages – in every time, every country. Each of them have had a piece of the Shaman's soul. Eddie has all of them within him."

Valentino said that where the 1992 series featured a back-breaking hero, this run – scripted by little-known Jim Keplinger – is about "the advancement of Eddie's soul into what we'd call Godhead."

The $2.99 series debuts from Image in May. It is drawn by newcomers Carlos Rodriquez and Albert Puig *[#3 cover art, above].*

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Second new owner for Valiant heroes

THERE was a last minute hitch in John Taddeo's plans to acquire all the Valiant Comics properties not owned by Classic Media.

The former Marvel marketing manager had bid $925,000 for all the characters except Magnus, Solar and Turok when Acclaim's assets came under the hammer at a post-bankruptcy auction held on April 12. Although his bid was matched by that of Ashok Kothari, Jason Kothari and Chandra Shamdasani, it was Taddeo's that was accepted. However, it now appears he was unable to close the deal leaving the field clear for his rivals, who have completed the contract.

Nothing is known about the Kotharis and Shamdasani but they have announced their intention to resurrect Bloodshot, Ninjak, Shadowman, X-O Manowar et al in their original Valiant [pre Acclaim] versions.

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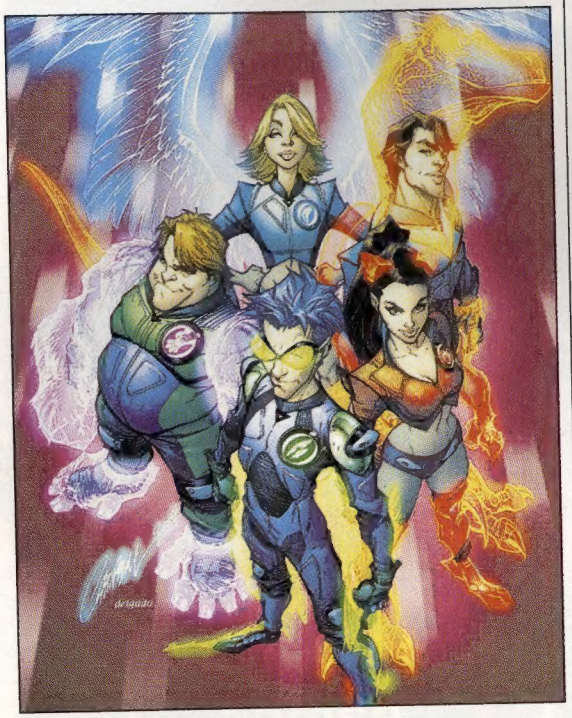


Danger Girl creator unveils new team

J SCOTT Campbell is returning to his roots for his first post-**Danger Girl** project.

The artist, who cut his teeth on WildStorm's hugely popular **Gen[13]**, is set to introduce another youthful superteam, one he has co-created with Andy Hartnell, the writer with whom he developed **Danger Girl**.

The new squad makes its entrance in **Wildsiderz** #0, a 32-pager promotionally priced at $1.99. The one-shot, which sets the stage for a five-issue mini launching in August, features an eight-page preview story as well as concept sketches and an in-depth interview with the creators. It ships on June 15.

Campbell, who remains a firm fan favourite despite an inordinate ability to miss deadlines, said, "**Wildsiderz** is the story of five everyday youths who unleash an brand new kind of fun and adventure when they tap into an amazing new technology that transforms and empowers them with animalistic abilities! But just what will ordinary teenagers do when they take on extraordinary alter egos? Will they abuse their new found powers to climb the high school hierarchy or hone their skills to become the next generation of heroes?"

The artist, who says he likes to think of his comicbook projects as individual "summer popcorn" movies broken up into in mini-series, added, "Someday I do plan to return to drawing more **Danger Girl** but I can't promise you when that will be. Probably not for several years."

"Equal parts Tank Girl and Doctor Strange"

WITH **Strange Girl**, writer Rick Remender will have two ongoing Image titles running concurrently but the new series promises to be much weirder than the tale of pirates and vampires unfolding in the recently launched **Sea of Red**, which he co-wrote with Kieron Dwyer.

"Basically after saving the life of a runt demon named Bloato, bar tender, occultist and all round arse kicker Bethany Black unwittingly discovers that God means to soon return for the second Rapture when he will wipe the Earth clean of everything," Remender told **CI** when talking about Image's **Strange Girl**. "With the end of the world coming, Bethany and Bloato set out to find the last doorway left into heaven and plead for admission. Equal parts **Tank Girl** and **Doctor Strange**, Bethany Black is the unlikely last hope for a population of humans – with no reason to hope."

Above and top: Eric Nguyen-drawn story pages from the first issue of Image's $2.95 ***Strange Girl****, which premieres on June 8.*

Remender, who is joined on **Strange Girl** by former **Storm-Watch: Team Achilles** inker Eric Nguyen, said, "The first issue shows us the time of The Rapture and then skips ahead 10 years to where we find Bethany all grown up, as it were, There are a number of other tales to be told in the time between when The Rapture takes place and when the first story arc happens. Bethany had to basically grow up in Hell on Earth and find a way and a reason to hold on to her soul. We all make it through very tiring times in life and leave parts of ourselves behind to survive. What it takes to grow up surrounded by vile monsters and not become one is a theme in the book."

Big stink

In conclusion the writer added, "I am using this story to examine some hypocrisy perpetrated by the agnostic and the religious. I do think there is a good story here, and maybe even a few thought provoking conclusions. If that sounds bad to you, go read some-thing safe that conforms strictly to your world view without chall-enging your belief system. Better yet, buy the book and make a big stink about it with your church group and help my sales. Either way..."

"The end of a rocky road"

Despite a 20 year history, a one-time three million daily audience and the country's favourite hobby as its subject matter, ***Striker*** *fails to score*

"IT'S tragic, but we have finally come to the end of a rocky road," publisher Pete Nash announced in his weekly editorial. "I have to announce that next week's issue of **Striker** will be the last comic."

Nash is a self-taught comics writer/artist who started out as a sub-editor on **The Sun**. "J. Jonah Jameson was a pussycat compared to (**Sun** editor) Kelvin MacKenzie," he once commented. Never been one for writing trivial editorials, in one issue of **Striker** Nash had openly criticised his distributor, saying he was eager to get out of his contract to be able to move elsewhere.

"We have tried everything we can to make it the success it deserves to be," he continued in issue 86. "But we have finally been beaten into the ground by the lack of resources that have hampered us ever since our launch back in August, 2003."

Nash created *Striker* as a three-frame strip for **The Sun** newspaper 20 years ago inspired by *George & Lynn* and *Axa*. He grew it into a full page computer-generated strip, then quit **The Sun** to launch it as a standalone.

Thanking readers, particularly those who bought shares, he said that he felt he had let them down. "The money raised by readers last July had given us a lifeline," he admitted. "By September we had achieved breakeven and we entered the new year with renewed confidence."

Little trade support

Stating in print what many others have come to realise, he blamed "dwindling sales and the ongoing battle to get the title into newsagents in the face of distribution changes which do little to support small publishers."

The title also failed to secure distribution through the UK arm of Diamond Comic Distributors, which meant it was not on sale in specialist comic shops.

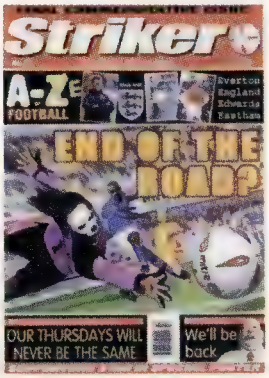
"But for an independent comic to have even gotten this far in this day and age is a triumph," said cartoonist and comics writer Lew Stringer in **Striker**'s letters column. "It should always be considered a success not a failure."

"What makes it so hard to bear is the incredible reaction from our readers, who are so upset to see it close," says Nash. "However, it also gives me the motivation to try and resurrect it in a new format." Ever the fighter, Nash is already looking at reverting to the wider reach of newspapers for **Striker**, and is investigating the possibility of a comics insert section, while also costing out the likelihood of a relaunched monthly magazine title which could include *Classic Striker* and feature material.

John Freeman, editor of news site *downthetubes.com*, said, "I'm very sorry to see the title fold, since success could have inspired other publishers to dip their toes in the adventure comics market and see the return of a much-missed genre of comics to UK newsstands. Early on in **Striker**'s planning stages, Pete had plans for a companion title featuring adventure strips, a comic that had the potential to be a new **2000 AD**."

Instead, the trade – which did so little to support the title – will view its cancellation as further proof there is no mainstream market for comics beyond the blossoming pre-school area.

The evolution of Pete Nash's Striker. Above: From its November 11, 1985 debut in ***The Sun****, to its move to colour (October 6, 1990) and the tentative use of 3D rendering (March 16, 1998). Below: its launch as a standalone 32 page weekly title, on August 28, 2003 and its final issue, the 36-page #87, May 12, 2005.*



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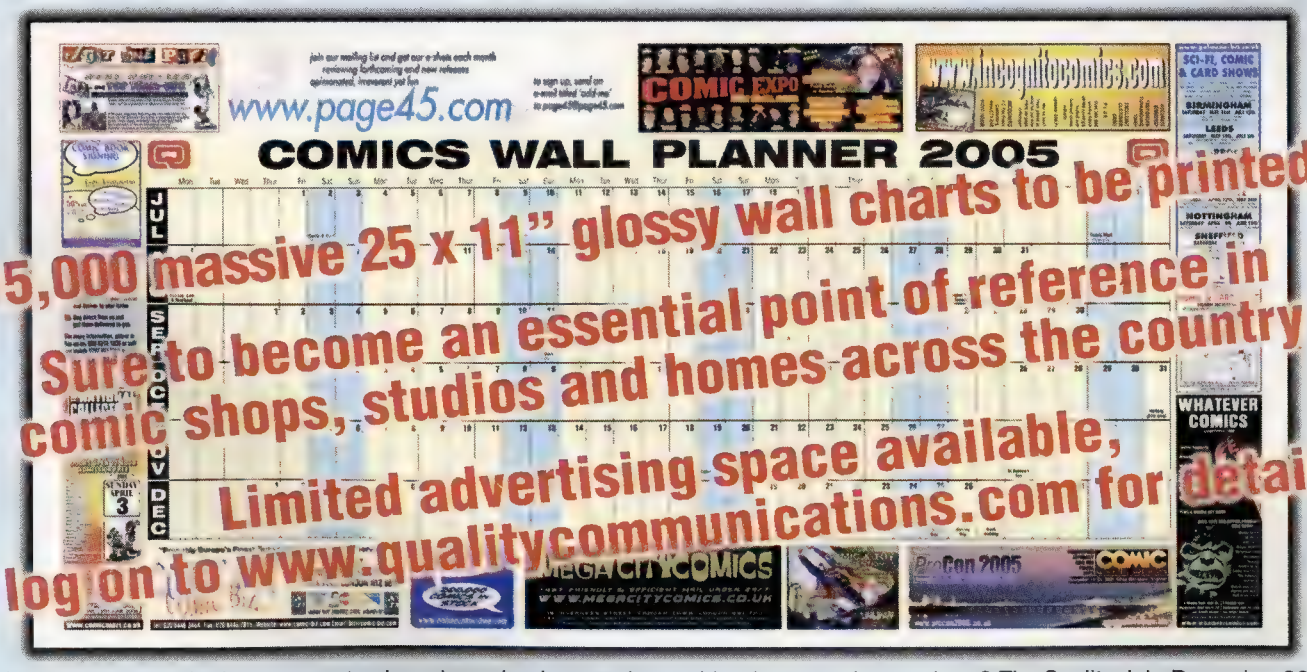

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Marvel's youth team returns

Pictured: Skottie Young's cover art for the first two issues [#1 above] of Marvel's $2.99 ***New Warriors*** *six-parter, which debuts on June 8.*

WHILE the New Warriors were once viewed as being Marvel's Teen Titans without the kid sidekick angle, Zeb Wells sees the squad as being analogous to an entirely different group of guys.

The writer, who is reviving the team that debuted in 1989's **Thor** #411, told **CI** he views the New Warriors as more like the team from *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* "but instead of showing up and painting your dining room lime-green, they show up and vanquish the super-villain that is plaguing your town."

Second stringers

Wells, who came up with the new direction in collaboration with Marvel/Tsunami's **Human Torch** artist Skottie Young, said, "I think we both had fond memories of the New Warriors as a concept, but wanted to find a way to put a spin on it so we wouldn't just be doing a conventional superteam, you know, more of the same. If I want to read about superheroes going on patrols and fighting crime in New York, I read **Spider-Man** or **The Avengers**. The big boys do that well enough already. A book starring a group of admitted second stringers needs its own identity, we decided."

"Since we are dealing with a team of 20-somethings, that is the 'next generation of superheroes', as they were originally billed, I wanted to have them doing things in an unconventional way," continued Wells, whose credits include **Peter Parker, Spectacular Spider-Man** and **Spider-Man/Doctor Octopus: Year One**. "I thought it'd be great if they maybe felt redundant or directionless in the big city where they first started fighting crime."

Extreme Makeover

"What if, like most 20-somethings, they wanted to get away and 'find themselves' as superheroes," the writer asked rhetorically. "I thought it'd be great if they took long road trips and found the villains that were off the map. The villains that had moved out of the big leagues of New York City and had settled into a nice, comfortable life of crime in small town America.

"Skottie thought we needed a strong reason for them to be doing this," Wells stated. "Why would a group of heroes hop in a van and trek across America? Who would find the villains for them? He asked what if it was like a mix between *Road Rules* and

Extreme Makeover: Home Edition? That was the springboard we began to hammer out."

Summing up, Wells – who said the team comprises Night Thrasher, Nova, Namorita and Speedball plus the Taylor Foundation – declared, "We have what I'd consider a 'fun' concept. Once we get rolling every issue takes place in a new town with a new villain. It lets me experiment with fun high concepts and come up with the craziest stuff for Skottie to draw. At the same time I want Warriors fans to enjoy the fact that these are the same characters they know and love.

"We're having fun but not at the expense of the characters."

All change for G.I. Joe

ALTHOUGH Devil's Due's **G.I. Joe** is still selling in excess of 20,000 an issue, the action figure tie-in has lost almost a third of its readership in the past year and sales are only a fraction of the 62,000 plus achieved by the first issue when it shipped as an Image comic in September 2001.

*Above: Stefano Caselli and Andrew Pepoy's cover art for the first $2.95 issue of Devil's Due's relaunched **G.I. Joe**, shipping in August.*

Hoping to re-ignite interest in the title, the Chicago-based publisher is to relaunch the monthly from #1 with a new creative team and a new direction. Incoming are **WildCats Version 3.0** writer Joe Casey and the **G.I. Joe: Master and Apprentice** art team of Stefano Caselli and Sunder Raj. They inherit not only a team of Joes seriously depleted by events chronicled in the conclusion to the original series but also a Cobra Command that has been decimated during the same action.

"G.I. Joe is going to have a tighter, smaller roster and a different agenda," publisher Josh Blaylock explained. "Their existence will once again be denied by the government. They're going to be a much more pro-active Joe rather than reactive and Cobra isn't going to be the only threat out there. G.I. Joe is going to have more of a 'rogues gallery' and they're going to have to hunt down the members of Cobra wherever they are, making sure they never have a chance to regain their former power."

The relaunch is previewed in a June-shipping 24-pager, **G.I. Joe: America's Elite** #0, which is promotionally priced at 25¢.

*MARVEL is resurrecting its non-team but, given the creative talent behind the revival, it is unlikely the new **Defenders** will bear much comparison with either of its two predecessors. Coming on board to chronicle the latest exploits of Doctor Strange, the Hulk, Namor and the Silver Surfer are writers Keith Giffen and J M DeMatteis and penciller Kevin Maguire, who together mixed humour with superheroics for DC's **Formerly Known as the Justice League** and its sequel,* I Can't Believe it's not the Justice League *[currently running through **JLA Classified** #4-9]. The first issue* [see Maguire's cover art above] *of the **Defenders** five-parter ships on July 20, priced $2.99*

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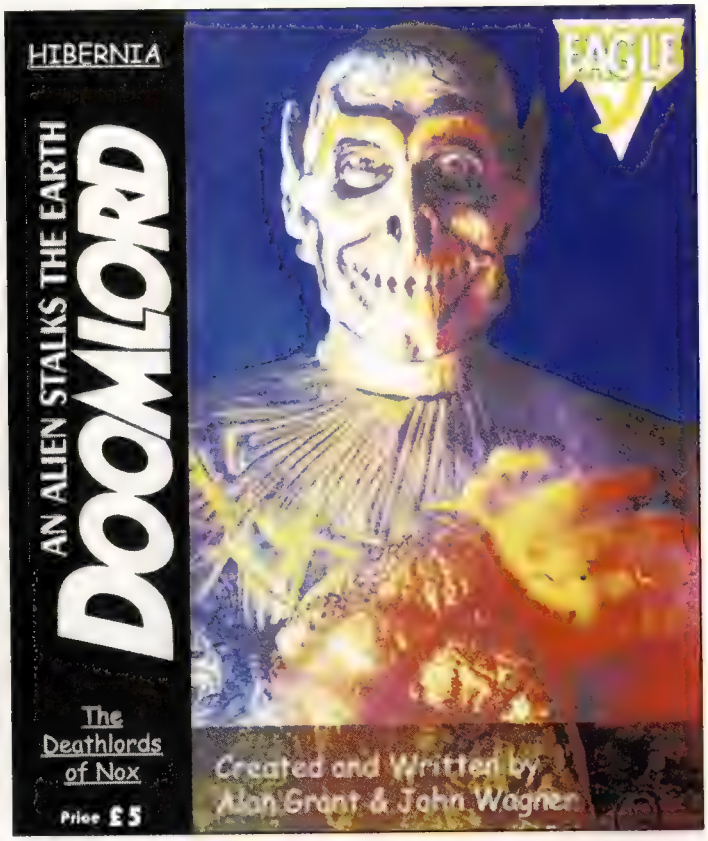

*A COLLECTION of strips featuring the most popular character from **Eagle**'s second – 1982 – incarnation is the first title from Hibernia. Set up by Irish fan David McDonald who worked with Titan Books on its forthcoming **Spider** and **Steel Claw** compilations, the newly-established label's 72-page **Doomlord: The Deathlord of Nox** reprints the exploits of the shape-changing alien from issues #79-102, the first to be told using art rather than photographs. Licensed from the Dan Dare Corporation, the black and white magazine-sized softcover is written by Doomlord co-creators Alan Grant and John Wagner and illustrated by Heinzl. It also includes a synopsis of the preceding photostories and is available now from David McDonald, Cappagh, Castlebar, Co Mayo, Ireland, priced £5.70 inc postage; email Doomlord@eircom.net for further details.*

Taking on Ballast

END OF the Century Club creator Ilya is teaming up with former **X-Men** writer Joe Kelly to introduce an unstoppable contract killer who has taken so many lives that God has offered him a job.

Published by Active Images, the black and white **Ballast** features an assassin now forbidden from taking another life.

"As the title might suggest, the essential concept is about balance – the balance between good and evil – and penance," Ilya told **CI**. "The cosmic balance must be maintained at all cost, in the conscience and every action of a deeply compromised individual – our central character, professional killer-for-hire Mason Krokus. How does one man make up for leading a life so evil it threatens all of existence?

"If all that sounds too much, you could say it's all about guns, guts and glory," suggested the British writer/artist, who said he and Kelly hoped to follow their 40-page one-shot with an ongoing series.

Ilya explained that, apart from the opportunity to work with Kelly, he was attracted to the idea by its defiance of genre conventions. "I love that I get to make Mason the ultimate grim and gritty great stone face – Darkseid excepted – and then throw him into alternately absurd and horrifically heart-rending situations. I don't want to give too much away, but when God shows up in person on page 11 – and she's an eight-year-old girl – you better believe it. That cracks me up, in all the sad and funny ways that count – because Mason can't afford to crack."

Referring to Krokus, Ilya concluded, "He's a bad man. He's a very bad man. And he's not even the villain of the piece."

*Above: The cover to Actives Images' **Ballast**; art by Ilya. The $4 one-shot ships in July.*

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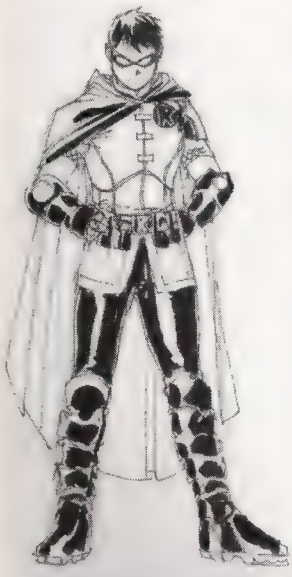
Miller and Lee kick off All-Star line

Top creators spearhead DC's back-to-basics approach to bringing in new readers attracted by Batman Begins *and* Superman Returns *movies*

Jim Lee reinterprets the Dynamic Duo for DC's ***All-Star Batman and Robin, the Boy Wonder.***



OVER the past few decades comics readers have become increasingly obsessed with plot and character continuity. The publishers – in particular Marvel and DC – have responded to that demand by hiring writers and artists who, as fans themselves, create ever more self-referential stories.

For potential new readers the result has been to make most superhero comics impenetrable to all but the most resolute. It is a problem that plagues an industry already desperate to grow its market; a problem that becomes especially pronounced when interest in the medium sparked by a blockbuster comics-based movie fails to translate into increased sales.

It is an issue DC is about to tackle with its fledgling **All-Star** line, which comprises of **All-Star Batman and Robin, the Boy Wonder** and **All-Star Superman** – although an **All-Star Wonder Woman** series is rumoured to be in development.

Describing the principles underpinning the line, Dan Didio, DC's vice president and executive editor, stated, "It's not really a separate imprint; it's a separate ideal. Although we are building such a cohesive universe for the DCU, I still want to do books that will attract the casual reader. A casual audience whose only contact with Batman and Superman might not be from the comics but from the movies, TV or cartoons."

Widest audience

"There are certain conceits in Batman and Robin that stay true in every incarnation of those characters," he explained. "These books are created to literally reach the widest audience possible, and not just the comicbook audience but anyone who has ever wanted to read or see anything about Superman or Batman."

What Didio is proposing is a back-to-basics approach where Batman will have the yellow oval around his insignia and Robin will be Dick Grayson while **All-Star Superman** is to feature such classic trappings of his most popular era as the Fortress of Solitude, the Phantom Zone and the bottle city of Kandor as well as various members of the Superman Family.

Where Marvel established its **Ultimate** line by creating 21st century versions of Spider-Man, the X-Men et al and setting them down in a new continuity, Didio takes another view on DC's line; "It's a different ideal. The **Ultimate** [titles] are an alternate continuity and the competition is building that identity even stronger than it is right now. **All-Star** is something that should stand on its own."

Unforgiving... brutal

DC's iconic approach could be viewed as a retrograde step but Didio has that angle covered. He is assigning top-name creators to give the books a modern look and appeal. Lined up for **Batman and Robin** are **Batman: The Dark Knight Returns** writer/artist Frank Miller and Jim Lee – the artist on *Hush*, the 12-parter that shot **Batman** back into the premiere league – while the former **New X-Men** team of Grant Morrison and artist Frank Quitely are set for **Superman**, which debuts in December.

Offering his take on **Batman and Robin, the Boy Wonder**, Miller said, "This is Dick Grayson's initiation and he's dealing with a very stern teacher. Batman is a hard teacher... unforgiving... brutal. At the same time, Grayson is watching Batman come into his full power."

Above: Frank Quitely's Superman takes a breather high above Metropolis. Below: Dick Grayson aka Robin swings across the Gotham skyline in one of series artists Jim Lee and Scott Williams' two alternate covers to the first $2.99 issue of DC's ***All-Star Batman and Robin, the Boy Wonder.*** *The six-weekly title premieres on July 13.*

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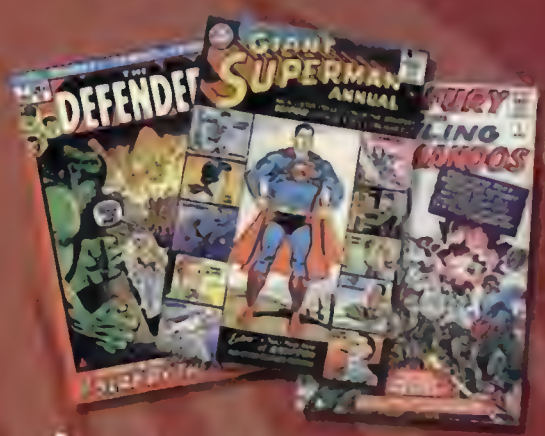

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Robot fighting SF hero returns

With Dark Horse reprinting his 1960s Gold Key adventures, Magnus also resurfaces at ibooks

MORE than 40 years after his first appearance, Magnus is on the comeback trail.

The robot fighting hero created by Russ Manning, who introduced him in the 1963 first issue of his own Gold Key title, is the target for a lot of media attention at the moment. He may have made a bigger splash when Jim Shooter chose him to be point hero for the Valiant Comics line in 1991 but Magnus's 1960s adventures are currently being reprinted in a series of trade paperbacks by Dark Horse and, in addition, he was excluded – as were Solar and Turok – from the recent auction of Valiant properties owned by the now-bankrupt Acclaim. That has led to much discussion centring on the future of the three Gold Key characters although Magnus's is secure.

Steranko designs

ibooks has acquired the licence to feature the Robot Fighter in new comicbook adventures. The New York-based publisher has, in turn, hired Louise 'Weezie' Simonson to write a trilogy of **Magnus** one-shots. To be published in June, the first of these is illustrated by newcomer Damion Hendricks, who is bringing in a new costume and other elements designed by Steranko, the legendary Marvel artist who wrote and drew **Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.** in the late 1960s.

Cyborg aliens

Set in 4005 AD, **Magnus, Robot Fighter** #1, takes place on an Earth that has been invaded by a cyborg race of alien pirates.

Despite the best efforts of Magnus and the other human freedom fighters, the Traffickers, as the aliens call themselves, quickly destroyed much of the planet's resources and killed or enslaved many of its inhabitants. Given the chance not only to strike a major blow against the aliens but also to rescue many of the human slaves, the robot fighting hero and Leeja Clane attempt to board the Trafficker mastership. It is a mission that will lead to major and irrevocable changes for Magnus.

The ibooks licence does not allow the publisher to use any of the characters or concepts introduced into the Magnus mythos during the Valiant era. The restriction was not a problem for Simonson, who admitted enjoying the original Gold Key stories of the 1960s. "Years later, I read and enjoyed the Valiant stories but was a little dissatisfied with the interpretation and actions of several major characters... Hey, I'm as much a fan-girl as the next guy. And I was disappointed when the **Magnus** stories became entangled in sprawling crossovers I found confusing."

*Pictured: Story pages from ibooks' **Magnus, Robot Fighter #1**; art by Damion Hendricks. The 48-page one-shot ships in June, priced $6.95.*

The writer, whose credits include **New Mutants**, **Power Pack**, **Superman: Man of Steel** and – with husband Walter – **X-Factor**, is not unhappy being restricted to Manning's 21 **Magnus** stories and the seven produced by others after he left the Gold Key title. "My graphic novel springs from what Manning told us... and what he didn't. But, as always, my stories grow out of the characters themselves."

Hammered peg

"In thinking about a story, I ask myself what each character wants most – what motivates and drives him or her," she explained. "I also wonder how events in a character's past influence his or her present beliefs, desires and actions and lead him to make the choices that create a certain kind of future.

"Then," Simonson added, "being the evil person that I am, I wonder how I can keep my hero from getting what he wants. How do I test a hero like that? What would it take to break him? There's a Japanese saying – The Peg that Sticks Up gets Hammered – and it's pretty much the rule for testing a hero. As a writer, it's my job to hammer the hero – to throw at him moments of crisis that force him to make hard choices. To see if he shatters or grows stronger. As in real life, heroism isn't dependent on a character's powers or abilities but in his actions and the choices he makes."

For Simonson, the story is all about character. "But I'm interested not only in what choices a character makes but why he makes them."

Decent human

"Manning was pretty clear about the kind of guy Magnus is," she added. "He's a good, decent human who was given abilities beyond the norm and tries his best to live up to the charge he was given: to protect humanity against evil robots. And, because he's succeeded so far, Magnus is lauded as Earth's champion. Which is great, as far as it goes.

"But, in rereading the **Magnus** stories, I found there were also a lot of unanswered questions about Magnus and his world," Simonson continued. "For instance – Where exactly did the infant Magnus came from? How can a man, raised apart from other humans while being inculcated with the 'robot' ideal of unselfish service to humanity, relate to the reality of people – of teeming masses and flexible moral codes? Oddly enough, Magnus seems to do remarkably well at this."

In Brief

DALEY Osiyemi and artist David Bircham are planning a six-issue sequel to their acclaimed **Brodie's Law** series for next year.

In the meantime the Pulp Theatre Entertainment crew are collecting their first six-parter in a 150-page trade paperback due for release in August. Priced £10.99/$14.95, the 6½x10" **Brodie's Law** tells of Jack Brodie, an East London thief, who possesses the power to 'suck your soul dry' by stealing a person's thoughts and identity before returning it tainted with his own evil deeds. Framed for a murder he did not commit, Brodie embarks on a non-stop mission to find his kidnapped son.

MARVEL'S old **Spectacular Spider-Man** team of writer Paul Jenkins and artist Humberto Ramos are getting back together to produce a murder mystery set in The Vatican.

A Dark Horse six-parter, their $2.99 **Revelations** kicks off on August 31.

THE ACQUISITION earlier this year of Beckett Publications, Beckett.com and Beckett Grading Services by Apprise Media has left the publisher of such comics as **Ruule**, **Fade from Grace** and **The Ballad of Sleeping Beauty** as a standalone enterprise without any support staff to handle such administrative chores as sales, marketing and printing.

As a result Beckett Entertainment's president, Jeff Amano has decided to move his titles under the Image umbrella. "Our choices were to rebuild a whole new support staff or focus on our content. For us, Image Central makes a lot of sense, partnering with their experience, expertise and established brand."

The new arrangement kicks off in September with the publication of **Ronin Hood of the 47 Samurai**, an original graphic novel by Amano and artist Craig (**Impulse**) Rousseau. Trade paperback collections of **Ruule: Ganglords of Chinatown**, **Fade from Grace** and **Kiss and Tell** follow, one a month starting in October.

ORGANISED by the London-based Cartoon Art Trust, *Picture Yourself* is a workshop at which Steve Marchant teaches youngsters how to write and draw comic strips in which they are the star.

Held on Tuesday, May 31 for 8 to 10 year-olds and again on Thursday, June 2 for ages 11 to 14, the cost is £20 per session. The venue is The Cartoon Art Trust Museum, 7-13 Brunswick Centre, Bernard Street, London WC1. Telephone 020-7278 7172 for further details.

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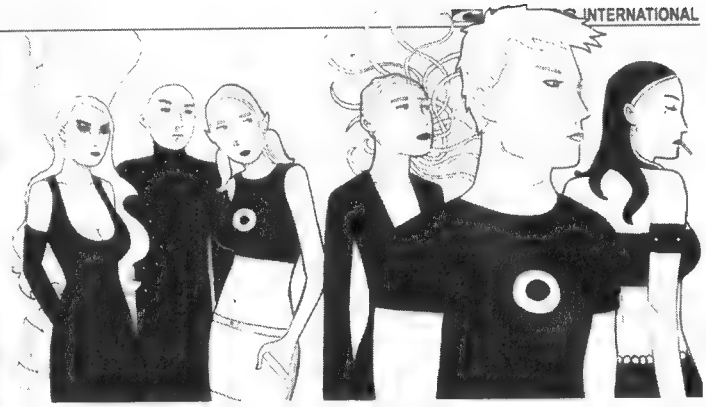


*MARTIN Eden is bringing his self-published **O Men** to a conclusion with issue #27* [wraparound cover, above]. *"Every superhuman we've met during the series faces off against the villainess Anathema – and it's not gonna be pretty. I can guarantee lots and lots of shocks and surprises, and there will actually only be one member of the team left at the end of it all," he warned. After a break, the writer/artist intends to relaunch the long-running small press superhero title next January. "Volume Two will be around 10 issues long and will see the O Men addressing one of the major subplots from the first volume. I see it as **Watchmen** meets **Global Frequency**," Eden told **CI**. "There will be an intro issue featuring a whole new team as they face off against some very cool new villains," he concluded.*

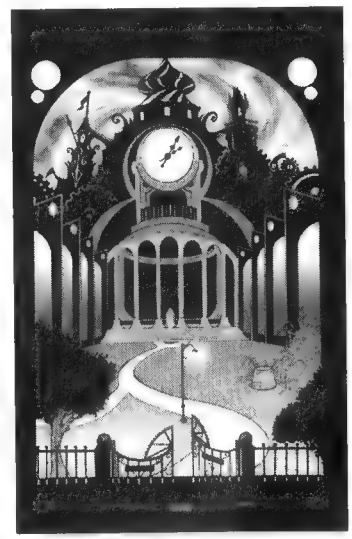
Avigon redux

IMAGE is once again publishing a Jimmie Robertson adaptation of Ché Gilson's small press title **Deus Ex Machina** but the new version contains 132 more pages than the edition five years ago.

Gilson, who told **CI** the retitled **Avigon** is set in a somewhat steam-punk universe, said, "The entire story takes place in the Qaddisin Empire. The main characters are Avigon, Pulsifer, Kazrael and Exley.

"Avigon is a dreamer," she continued. "She has her head in the clouds and wants all the things she is told she cannot have. Pulsifer is the voice of reason. She seems harsh even cruel at times. But she's a realist. It's something that Avigon finds crushing. She doesn't want to hear that she can't be human and accepted as something other than a clockwork. Kazrael is the up and comer. He was Pulsifer's student but tired of her ego and quit. His goal is to surpass his former master. Exley wants to control Avigon. He loves her and, because she's a clockwork, he feels entitles to take that control by whatever means necessary."

*Above: Rejected cover for Image's 192-page **Avigon: Gods and Demons** graphic novel; art by Jimmie Robinson.*



*Above: A Jimmie Robertson interior page from Image's black and white **Avigon: Gods and Demons** graphic novel.*

According to Gilson, the new 192-page version of **Avigon**, which is subtitled **Gods and Demons**, means her story is now completely self-contained.

For his part, Robertson, whose credits include such Image titles as **Amanda and Gunn** and **The Adventures of Evil and Malice**, said, "Ché is more than just a writer, she is also an artist. All character designs came from her works. She has this elongated manga style, and combined with my art gives it a look somewhere between Tim Burton and American styled manga."

Regarding the need for reference, he added, "Since Avigon isn't in a historical world but some alternative universe, I was able to get away with a lot of things. But Ché loves this 'world', she has maps, a full blown economy, history and even political structure. She would periodically send me items in the mail.

"I'd say in all, the world view she has in her head was all the level of research I needed for the characters. She is good at world building, I'm not sure I captured even half of what she envisioned," stated Robinson, who has been working on **Gods and Demons** on and off for several years.

Gibbons reforms GLC

THE RANN/Thanagar War is offering **Watchmen** co-creator/artist Dave Gibbons more than merely another writing credit for his CV.

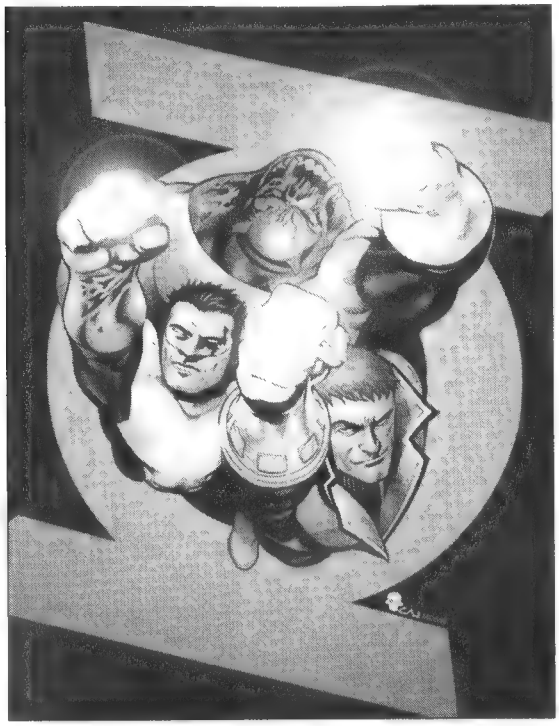
It is also providing him with the opportunity to kick off a radical restructuring of the outer space aspect of the DC Universe, where Green Lantern and the Green Lantern Corps are among the major players.

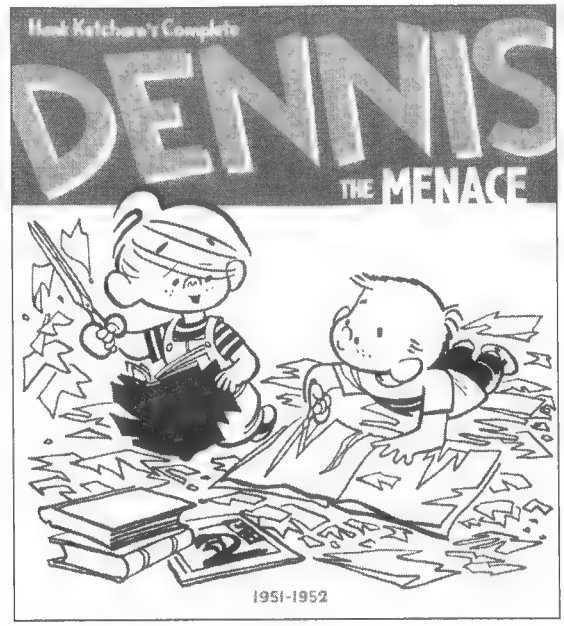
With Hal Jordan now reinstated as the Green Lantern of Space Sector 2814 by writer Geoff Johns and about to become the star of a new **Green Lantern** monthly drawn by Carlos Pacheco and Jesus Merino, Gibbons has taken on the task of rebuilding the Corps in tandem with penciller Patrick (**Aquaman**) Gleason .

The pair is teaming up for the five-issue **Green Lantern Corps: Recharge**, which begins in September. Offering a broad idea of what is planned, Gibbons, who drew a number of *GLC* back-up stories in the 1970s, said, "With various events that have been going on around the DC Universe, and with an inkling of what's coming up, which will actually be seen as the major opposition in this miniseries, the Guardians have decided they must rebuild the Green Lantern Corps.

"Things are too precarious in space, particularly with the Rann/Thanagar War destabilising many parts of the galaxy," he added. "This time, the Guardians and the assembled Green Lanterns know that they must reform the Corps and do it right from the start, to weld it together into a cohesive force rather than a collection of local agents who are kind of loosely bonded together.

"The actual central organisation of the Corps is extremely important this time around, so training the Green Lanterns is very much formalised," he added. "We'll see the training that individuals are expected to complete before being given their ring but, before that, we'll see on what basis you're actually chosen to be a Green Lantern in the first place."





*FOLLOWING its company-saving success with the **Complete Peanuts** title, Fantagraphics is launching a companion series, one spotlighting what the publisher claims is the second most popular cartoon kid in the world after Charlie Brown. Nothing to do with **The Beano**'s mischievous character of the same name, **Hank Ketcham's Complete Dennis the Menace** launches on September 25. The first 5½x6¾" hardcover volume reprints the initial two years from March 14, 1951 – four months after Charles (Peanuts) Schulz started his own historic comic strip – when Ketcham's strip kicked off in a mere 16 US newspapers. The black and white 624-pager is priced $24.95.*

DC gets new logo

IN AN attempt to compete with Marvel as a 21st century entertainment conglomerate, DC is casting off its bullet logo and rebranding.

It is dispensing with the two-dimensional logo which it has stayed with since it was conceived in 1977 by Milton Glaser of *I ♥ New York* fame. In its place comes a new 3-D logo *[right]*. Designed by Brainchild Studios' Josh Beatman, it is to appear from June not only on comicbooks, graphic novels and related merchandise but also films and television series based on DC properties are to feature the brand, a unification tactic that had not previously been used.

"This new logo and branding programme is a statement that the DC brand is a strategic asset and vital tool in our approach to creating and developing films, television, merchandising and games," stated Kevin Tsujihara, executive vice president, corporate business development and strategy at Warner Bros Entertainment.

Comics debut for Oz

THE SON of Dr Evil is making his comics debut or rather the actor who portrays him in the *Austin Powers* movies is.

In collaboration with Hugh Sterbakov, another comics newcomer, Seth Green – who also took the part of Oz in the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* TV series – is writing an Image/Top Cow six-parter about college freshmen with superpowers.

The aptly-titled **Freshmen** is pencilled by Leonard (**JSA**) Kirk, who told **CI**, "I've drawn humorous material before but never in a project that had so much of it. I also like how some of the old conventions of people with superpowers are given a bit of a twist by placing them in a more realistic setting. I love how some of the characters are quite ready to embrace their new roles as superheroes while others.... let's just say they aren't as enthusiastic."

FRESHMEN
THE INTOXICATOR
DESIGN #1
HIS SUPER POWER CAUSES BUBBLES TO FLOAT AND POP AROUND HIS HEAD WHEN DRUNK. (JUST LIKE A CARTOON CHARACTER)
JOINT BEHIND EAR
SMALL CYLINDRICAL POCKETS ON EACH ARM HOLDING JOINTS
COLLECTION OF BOTTLE OPENERS CAN OPENERS & CORKSCREWS DESIGNED TO OPEN 98.6% OF KNOWN ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES WORLDWIDE
BATTERY POWERED INSULATED POCKETS FOR HOLDING BOTTLES & CANS
LARGE POCKETS FOR WEED (SORTED BY REGION AND INTENSITY - COLUMBIAN, MEXICAN, ETC.)
UTILITY BELT USED PRIMARILY TO HOLD UP PANTS (THOUGH, ODDLY, LEFT UNBUCKLED MOST OF THE TIME)
BELT ALSO HOLDS A SELECTION OF ROLLING PAPERS, MATCHES, LIGHTERS, ETC.
PUKE AND PISS STAINS
EGG SALAD SANDWICH
BURRITO
VERMOUTH

*Above: From Image/Top Cow's **Freshmen**, a $2.99 six-parter premiering in July, the Intoxicator as visualised by Leonard Kirk. The artist told **CI**, "Once he's drunk, he can belch and instantly make everyone in the path of that belch as drunk as he is."*

CI #183 competition winners

IN **CI** #183, 10 readers were each offered the opportunity to win copies of Rebellion's **Shakara** hardcover. The winners were:

Don Barr, Bedworth
B Bridges, Gt Waldingfield
Colin Devey, Normanton
D Green, Stanley, Co. Durham
John Harvey, Holt, Stoke
P Milton, Sydenham, London
D Peel, Launceston, Cornwall
Anne Ridley, Poole, Dorset
A R Thompson, Didcot, Oxon
Ian Ward, Ashford, Kent

Reader votes scored the 10 most popular sections of the issue as:

1 News International (19.4%)
2 Reviews (11.9%)
3 Bolland Strips preview (8.8%)
4 Advance Listings (8.0%)
5 Fantastic Four feature (5.6%)
6 News Roundup (4.9%)
7 Biff's Illuminations (4.8%)
8 Shakara competition (4.7%)
9 Talking Shop (4.6%)
10 Sez Dez (4.3%)

On least popular "None, all fine" reassured us with a huge 37.1%. But, while being the 8th most popular, *Talking Shop* split the readership by also being the least popular at 11.4%. *Comics Economics* followed at 8.5%

Book Report

RICH Buckler has come up with a less publisher-centric version of Stan Lee and John Buscema's perennial seller, **How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way**.

To be published in black and white by Blue Line Pro in June, the Deathlok creator's 130-page **How to be a Dynamic Comic Book Artist** is priced $24.95.

PROLIFIC comics historian Ron Goulart has his **The Adventurous Decade** being brought back into print by Hermes Press, which redesigned the 192-page softcover as a landscape edition to echo the format of the newspaper strips it reprints.

First published in 1975, the $24.99 volume is subtitled **Comic Strips of the Thirties**. It features such well-known strips as *Buck Rogers, Scorchy Smith* and *The Spirit* alongside *Bronc Peeler, Roy Powers, Dan Dunn* and other such obscurities. Partially in colour, the July shipping book also covers the background to the strips using interviews with such creators as Noel Sickles, Milton Caniff and Roy Crane as its base.

THE WORK of the creator of cult favourite **The Adventures of Cholly and Flytrap** is spotlighted in a $34.95 Vanguard hardcover.

Shipping in July, **The Fantastic Art of Arthur Suydam** is a 8x11" 128-page part colour book. It is also available as a signed and numbered edition for an additional $15, with 16 extra pages.

A COMPANION to the second volume of its **Modern Masters** series of books, TwoMorrows' ***Modern Masters: In the Studio with George Pérez*** is a 120-minute DVD that follows the **JLA/Avengers** artist through his daily routine as he works on a special issue of Image/Top Cow's **Witchblade**.

Priced $29.95, the documentary-style production ships on August 10. It includes interviews with Marv Wolfman, Ron Marz and others who have worked with Pérez as well as a special feature watching the artist 'work' during one of his many convention appearances.

IN FANTAGRAPHICS' 256-page **Merchant of Dennis the Menace**, cartoonist Hank Ketcham not only tells his own story but also that of the creation of the much-loved US mischief maker.

A companion to **The Complete Dennis the Menace** *[see page 21]*, the fully illustrated 9x9" softcover, ships in August, priced $19.95.

... news round up... news round up... news round up... news round

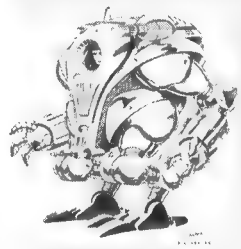
Now in its Fifth Year

THIS year's Moniaive Comics Festival is being held over the weekend of September 3-4.

Although there is always a large Scottish contingent in attendance, the low key, fan-friendly event attracts writers and artists from all over the UK to the village, which lies 15 miles north west of Dumfries in the picturesque region known as Forgotten Scotland. Started in 2001 by organiser Sue Grant as a way of raising funds for the local community, which had been devastated by the foot and mouth scare, the Festival has become an annual affair and Scotland's premiere comics event.

For further details contact Sue on 01848 200331 or email her at sue@badpress.demon.co.uk

Tomorrow Knights RPG delayed



ORIGINALLY scheduled for April, the ***Tomorrow Knights*** role playing game has been pushed back to June.

Produced by Z-Man Games, the game is based on the six-issue SF mini created by writer/artists Roy Richardson and Rod Wigham for Marvel's Epic Comics imprint in 1990.

Richardson conceived the game in collaboration with June Brigman, the original **Power Pack** artist .

Dynamite acquires Battlestar

DYNAMITE Entertainment has scored a significant coup with its acquisition of the licence to produce comicbooks based on a major SF TV series.

The Dynamic Forces subsidiary, Dynamite plans to launch its **Battlestar Galactica** comic in the autumn. It is based on the current Sci-Fi Channel update rather than the 1970s original movie to which Marvel once held the rights.

Peter David on Spider-Man

MARVEL is developing an ongoing Spider-Man title that is to be written by Peter David, whose first professional work was on **Peter Parker, Spectacular Spider-Man** in 1985's #103.

Mike Wieringto and Karl Kesel are joining the writer better known for his long and distinguished run on **Incredible Hulk** on the new **Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man**.

The artists were intended to collaborate on the title with original writer Mark Waid, with whom they had worked on **Fantastic Four**.

Last Apache Warrior

FORMER **Animal Man** artist Chaz Truog is making one of his rare forays back in to comics to tell a story of a famous Native American war chief's last stand against the US cavalry.

Moonstone's **Geronimo** is published in August. Subtitled **The Last Apache Warrior**, the black and white 64-pager is priced $7.95. It is written by Eric Griffin, who also wrote **Vampire the Masquerade**, the Chicago-based publisher's tie-in with the White Wolf role playing game.

More space opera for Mongoose

ALTHOUGH contracts have yet to be signed, Mongoose Publishing is looking to double its graphic novel line with a second licenced title.

Tony Lee, who is already writing the Swindon-based publisher's recently launched **Starship Troopers** trilogy, is being lined up to script a **Babylon 5** title. The series is based on J Michael Straczynski's SF TV show which spawned two DC comics: a short-lived [11-issue] title in 1995 and a three-issue miniseries – **In Valen's Name** – three years later, which collected a Titan **Babylon 5** magazine serial.

Desperate Dan Lives

IN TANDEM with two veteran **Dandy** artists – *Eddie Potter at Strange Hill School*'s David Mostyn and Barrie (*Captain Handsome*) Appleby, *Desperate Dan* writer Iain McLaughlin will be discussing his work as part of this year's Faringdon Arts Festival.

A three-hour event, *Desperate Dan Lives* takes place from 1.00 to 2.00pm on Saturday, July 9 at the United Church, Coxwell Street in Faringdon, Oxfordshire and then from 2.30 to 4.30pm at Faringdon Junior School in Gloucester Street. The first panel is mainly intended for interested adults while the second is a 'draw with' session primarily aimed at children. Entrance is free.

For further details log on to http://www.faringdonartsfestival.org/ or telephone 01367 240570.

Dark Horse lands Dungeon Siege

AL (**GEN13**) Rio and **Buffy the Vampire Slayer**'s Cliff Richard are among the artists working on an 88-page Dark Horse tie-in with a forthcoming computer game.

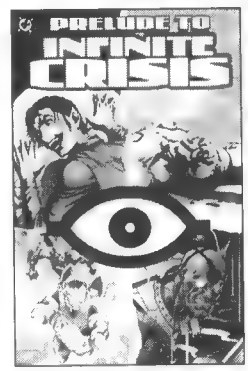
Based on sequel Gas Powered Games' sequel of the same name, **Dungeon Siege** is written by Paul Alden, who wrote an issue [#14] of **Star Wars: Empire** for Dark Horse.

Subtitled **The Battle for Aranna**, the 5¼x7½" digest-sized softcover tells of the clash between evil giant Zaramoth and the human chieftain Azunai.

One of the characters wants to keep the power of the magical River of Souls for himself while the other believes it belongs to all of Aranna.

The $6.95 volume ships on September 7.

Prelude to Infinite Crisis



DC IS rush releasing a 96-page trade paperback that reprints the **Flash** #219/**Wonder Woman** #214 crossover as well as the lead story from **Superman Secret Files 2004**.

Also included are selected extracts from nearly two dozen other DC Universe comics, with new text adding context to each story sequence.

The New York-based publisher's **Prelude to Infinite Crisis** is collecting these stories as being the important early lead-ins to its forthcoming major crossover.

The $5.99 softcover, which ships on June 22, features work by writers Geoff Johns and Greg Rucka and artists Justiniano, Livesay, Walden Wong, Drew Johnson and Ray Snyder among others.

Top Cow saves on Dynamic Forces

TWO JOYCE Chin-drawn comics previously available only from Dynamic Forces in limited editions of 5,000 copies each are being reissued together in an Image/Top Cow one-shot that shaves $11 off the original price.

Included in the 32-page **Tomb Raider/Witchblade/Magdalena/Vampirella** is **Tomb Raider: Sphere of Influence** and **Witchblade/Magdalena/Vampirella: Untold Story**. Originally priced $6.99 each, the comics are written by Kevin McCarthy – the

... people in the news... people in

B Clay Moore has left Image to concentrate on his freelance writing career.

Replacing the writer of such titles as **Hawaiian Dick** and **Battle Hymn** as the California-based co-operative's public relations and marketing coordinator is Jim Demonakos. He is co-owner of The Comic Shop – located in Lynwood, Washington – and founder of the Emerald City ComiCon.

ERIC Basaldua has signed exclusively to Top Cow Comics for three years.

The artist's first work under the new contract is the current **Darkness/Vampirella** one-shot. His previous credits include **The Magdalena**, **Tomb Raider** and **Blood Legacy: The Young Ones**.

up... news round up... news round up... news round up... news

up... news round up... news round up... news round up... news round

editor/writer of Dark Horse's **The Escapist** – and Gail (**Birds of Prey**) Simone, respectively. Shipping in July, the $2.99 amalgamated edition features a cover by Billy Tan and two one-in-four variant covers: one each by Art Adams and Chin.

Maid of Steel regains own title

KARA Zor-El is to get her own title just a year after writer Jeph Loeb and artist Michael Turner reintroduced Superman's cousin into the DC Universe in *The Supergirl from Krypton*, a six-parter that began in **Superman/Batman** #8.

Premiering on August 10, **Supergirl** is written by Loeb and drawn by Ian Churchill and Norm Rapmund, who worked with the writer on Awesome's **Coven**. The first $2.99 issue ships with a cover *[left]* by Churchill and a one-in-four variant by Turner *[below, left]*.

Referring to the Peter David written **Supergirl** series, which DC cancelled in 2003 after 80 issues, Loeb said, "This book is different. Kara Zor-El knows who she is. She knows the awesome responsibility it is to wear the 'S'. The trick for her now is to figure out if she wants to live in her much more famous cousin's shadow or break out on her own. Does Kid Flash wish he were the Flash? Does Robin get up every morning and think about how he'd be Batman? Those are different ways of playing a younger version of an icon."

Complementing the release of its first issue, DC is also planning to reissue **Superman/Batman** #19 as **Supergirl** #0. The story, by Loeb, Churchill and Rapmund, effectively functioned as a launching pad for the new **Supergirl**.

The cover art for the #0 issue will feature the same figure drawing of Kara Zor-El from the cover of **Superman/Batman** #19 but this time set against a white background.

Brit artist heads for Uncanny X-it

ALAN Davis is to leave **Uncanny X-Men**. His last issue is to be #463, which ships in August.

Commenting on his abrupt departure, the **Excalibur** and *Captain Britain* artist said, "I had tried to give the assignment my best shot but I didn't think it was working out. So I moved on. I do have something in the pipeline with Marvel but it is too early to go into any detail."

Scots Roar in Glasgow

AN EXHIBITION is being held of original pages of art, comics and graphic novel pages by Scotland-based creators spanning from **Electric Soup** –including work by Shug, Dave Alexander and early rarely seen Frank Quitely pages – up until contemporary work from **The Freedom Collective**, Ben Simpson, the **Northern Lightz** team and the Franco-Scottish duo metaphrog.

The event runs from May 6 to June 2 at DGP Studio and Space, 32 St Andrews Street in Glasgow's Saltmarket. It is open from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday and noon to 6.00pm on Saturday. Entrance is free. Telephone the gallery on 0141-552 4222 for further details.

Dynamite blends Raimi with Lovecraft

WITH two successful miniseries under its belt, Dynamite Entertainment is upgrading its **Army of Darkness** title to an ongoing monthly.

Like the earlier minis, the $2.99 comic is written by James (**Battlestar Galactica**) Kuhoric and drawn by relative newcomers Sanford Greene and Scott Kester. It relaunches from #1 with a four-issue serial that brings together H P Lovecraft's cult horror creation, the Re-Animator, and the world created by *Spider-Man* director Sam Raimi for the horror trilogy he began with 1983's *Evil Dead* movie.

It opens with the film's hero, Ash committed to Arkham Asylum – and that's the Lovecraft original Arkham, not the DC Universe imitation.

The first issue ships with alternate covers by Greene *[above]*, J G Jones, Gabrielle Dell'Otto and Nick Bradshaw, who also provides a one-in-25 variant. It is also available signed by Greene for an additional $17 and in a "High End Limited Edition" featuring a "Boomstick Foil" cover that comes with a 'Please Inquire' in place of a price tag.

DC goes back to print on SF war

THE FIRST issues of **The OMAC Project**, **The Rann/Thanagar War** and **Villains United**, three four-issue spin-offs from **Countdown to Infinite Crisis**, are being reprinted by DC.

The second edition of **Villains United** #1 features a new sketch cover by Dale Eaglesham while the new printings of the other two come with variant versions of the covers to the first edition.

All three reprintings are available now.

Marvel's Unknown hero comes back

Fortress of Solitude author Jonathan Lethem is to resurrect one of Marvel's more obscure 1970s creations, one who has not been seen since 1979's **Defenders** #78, which came almost two years after his death in the tenth and final issue of his own title.

Joining the novelist on the revival of **Omega the Unknown**, which is being developed for a 2006 debut, is the creator of the self-published **Pop Gun War**, Farel Dalrymple *[see art, left]*. As almost no details have been released about the project, it is impossible to say whether Lethem intends to radically rework the concept of a humanoid robot created by an alien race – as conceived by writers Steve Gerber and Mary Skrenes and artist Jim Mooney and introduced in 1976's **Omega the Unknown** #1 – or play it straight, picking up the story from where Gerber and Skrenes left it.

DC follows Marvel's price hike lead

WHEN Marvel solicited its June-shipping titles, it became apparent that it had raised the price of all its $2.25 comics. Now DC is following suit but not going the whole hog.

Instead of eradicating that price point completely, it is only increasing the price of **Batman**, **Nightwing**, **Robin**, **The Flash**, **JLA** and **Wonder Woman**. These will go up to $2.50 with effect from June. The *Johnny DC* titles, which include **Justice League Unlimited**, **Batman Strikes**, **Teen Titans Go**, **Power Puff Girls**, **Scooby Doo**, **Looney Tunes** et al, remain at $2.25 for the time being.

DC is also hiking the price of four Vertigo titles. While **100 Bullets** goes up to $2.75 from $2.50 with the July-shipping #62, **The Books of Magick: Life During Wartime**, **Fables** and **Lucifer** all move to the new price point with effect from June.

MAD Magazine is also going to cost more, going up from $3.50 to $3.99 beginning with issue #454, which ships in May.

the news.... people in the news...

THE perennial superhero fan-favourite whose credits include **Avengers**, **Justice League of America**, **New Teen Titans** and **Avengers-JLA** has signed an exclusivity agreement that will keep him with DC for five years.

The New York-based publisher has yet to disclose any of the projects it has lined up for George Pérez.

MARVEL has signed Manuel Garcia to an exclusive contract of unspecified length.

The artist, whose first work for the company was the adaptation of the *Daredevil* movie, was the regular penciller on **Mystique**.

He is currently drawing the recently launched **Spider-Man: Breakout** four-parter, written by Tony Bedard.

round up... news round up... news round up... news round up... news

Manga bulletins

As traditionally published in Japan, all manga titles are in a 5¼x6" digest format, in black and white and read from right to left unless otherwise stated.

ASIA Alfasi has won $5,000 in the first annual international competition to identify the best in manga and anime talent.

Alfasi – the first female participant in Hi8us Midlands' StripSearch scheme – won in the Kids Character Design category of the event, which was organised by the International Manga and Anime Festival. Her creation, Monir, is a young Arabian from the Muslim Abyssinian times who draws strength from his faith to fight injustice and battle for his family's survival.

"I went back to my Arab heritage to draw from its design," the 21-year-old Alfasi stated. "Calligraphy, myths and legends, I tried to incorporate them all into the character. Manga usually features Japanese culture and I wanted to introduce some Arabian mysticism to the market."

THE MANGA based on the video game that spawned numerous sequels as well as a 25-episode anime TV show, five different OVA series and a feature film, is to make its US debut through TokyoPop.

Hiroi Ouji's **Sakura Taisen** [**Sakura Wars**] is set in the 1920s. A blend of action, romance, fantasy, steam-powered mecha and demons, it features the comely members of the Flower Division as they defend Tokyo (and Paris) from an onslaught of demons. The first 192-page volume ships on July 12, priced $9.99.

ALC PUBLISHING is to launch a *yuri* [lesbian-themed] manga line in the US.

While such publishers as CPM Manga and Digital Manga offer *yaoi* [the male equivalent of *yuri*] titles, ALC [AniLesboCon] – a division of Yuricon – is the first to release *yuri* manga in America. Its English-language anthology, **Yuri Monogatari**, premieres in July. Rica Takashima's *Rica 'tte Kanjiil?* is set to be the line's second title.

DEL REY is adding three more manga titles to its list this autumn: **Gacha Gacha** by **Boys Be** artist Hiroyuki Tamakoshi, **Ghost Hunt** – an adaptation of the novel by Fuyumi Ono – and **Sugar Sugar Rune** by Moyoco Anno.

The Del Rey line is doing well. With an initial target of 14 titles, the six series it has launched so far have achieved total sales of one million in less than a year. Across the 24 volumes released, that averages out at a very respectable 41,000 copies per book.

Preview Extra: Albion

WHEN DC Comics parent company AOL Time Warner acquired UK publishing giant IPC, a wealth of British comics history became available to the US's longest-established comicbook publisher.

Thanks to **CI** bringing the possibility to everybody's attention last year, IPC Media publisher and comics fan Andrew Sumner (who began his career as a comics journalist on John Brown's **Speakeasy**) opened discussions with New York to make this a reality.

WildStorm editor-in-chief Scott Dunbier first worked in comics for Quality Communications on its mid-1980s IPC colour reprint line – which included a four-issue **Steel Claw** mini. So his familiarity with the material made his DC imprint a logical home for such a project.

The end product is that we are about to see a four colour contemporary revival of such characters as The Steel Claw, Captain Hurricane, The Spider, Robot Archie, Grimley Fiendish and more in the six-isssue mini, **Albion**.

Plotted by Alan Moore and written by his daughter Leah along with John Reppion (currently also writing Wildstorm's **Wild Girl**), the series is drawn by fellow Brit Shane Oakley and inked by Canada's George (**Captain Canuck**) Freeman. Cover art for the series is provided by Dave (**The Originals**) Gibbons.

The first issue, priced $2.99, goes on sale June 29, then continues weekly.

Pictured left is the spash page to issue one, with page two opposite.

HELLO, GORGEOUS.
'OT IN 'ERE, AIN'T IT? YOU MUST BE ALL SWEATY.
I THINK SHE MIGHT NEED DRYING OUT, EH GIRLS?
C'MERE!
:UNGH!
THAT'S QUITE ENOUGH, LADIES. ALICE, PUT HER DOWN, THERE'S A GOOD GIRL.
TODAY IS NOT THE DAY FOR MAKING TROUBLE. WE WILL SHORTLY BE UNDER INSPEC...
:BEEP BEEP:
AH, I'M AFRAID YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE ME.
PLAY NICELY NOW, GIRLS.

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Marvel/Paramount deal greenlights another ten

Mike Conroy's Frame to Frame

Examining the latest developments between films and comics

WHAT a difference a decade makes. In 1996 Marvel was in Chapter 11 bankruptcy and sinking fast. Now it's moving into movie production with a slate of 10 films heading into development and scheduled to be released over the next eight years.

Despite all the box office success experienced by its heroes in recent years, the self-styled House of Ideas has only been receiving royalties and licence fees. Substantial though those may be, the bulk of the profits has gone to the major studios that have provided the finance: 20th Century Fox paid for *X-Men*, *Daredevil*, *Elektra* and the much anticipated *Fantastic Four* while Sony put up the big bucks for *Spider-Man* and New Line Cinema – ironically a Time-Warner subsidiary – picked up the tab for *Blade*.

Of course, up until now, Marvel has also been protected from the effects of a flop – and one of those can be pretty ruinous, especially on an effects-heavy movie. The production budget for most Marvel movies is well over $100 million but *Spider-Man 2* is estimated to have cost twice that with another $50 million on top for marketing and distribution costs.

But Marvel is now prepared to take that risk and is setting its own production slate after doing a deal with Paramount, which funded *Hulk* for a total of $172 million including marketing. The new arrangement is backed by a financing commitment from Merrill Lynch Commercial Finance, which is providing a $525 million nonrecourse revolving credit facility over seven years. The debt is to be secured by the theatrical and motion picture production and distribution rights for 10 (undisclosed) Marvel heroes.

Although the deal exposes Marvel to more financial risk, the nonrecourse nature of the financing limits Marvel's actual cash risk to un-reimbursed development costs and general incremental overhead. That's peanuts when compared to what a Hollywood studio typically faces but it will be balanced by Marvel's ability under this new deal to keep a larger share of all the revenue streams related to its films, to begin building its own film library, to retain all merchandising revenues and to receive a producer fee for each film.

Silver Surfer

Paramount, which is not contributing to the production cost of the films, is to receive a distribution fee for each movie it distributes. It also gets to retain worldwide distribution rights to sequels to the films covered under the agreement.

But Paramount is to provide advance funding of promotion and advertising for the films, which is a good deal for Marvel when advertising costs for a blockbuster film can be as much as the $50 million Paramount itself spent on *Hulk*.

Who will feature in the movies, which have budgets ranging from $45 to $180 million, is still a matter of conjecture. It is however, not likely to include any of the heroes – Spider-Men, Blade, Fantastic Four, the X-Men et al – who are already licensed to Sony, 20th Century Fox or New Line. Also likely to be excluded are Ghost Rider, in production from Sony, Doctor Strange – which Dimension has under option – and Iron Man, which is being developed by New Line. Fox is even working on getting the Silver Surfer on the screen

Who does that leave? Well, Avi Arad, who played a pivotal role in Marvel's screen success and is likely to play a larger part in the future, may try for Deathlok, which Paramount itself has in development. There's also all the heroes that were part of the Artisan arrangement.

> **"[a deal] would provide some cash flow to start publishing again on a regular basis"**
>
> *...Jean-Marc Lofficier, Hexagon Syndicate*

Although that deal seems to have been inherited by Lion's Gate – which was responsible for *The Punisher* and the one-day-it-will-make-it-direct-to-DVD *Man-Thing* – Captain America and Nick Fury, who were also part of that contract, have already been mentioned in connection with the Paramount arrangement.

Barrel scraping

If, as seems possible, Artisan's collapse has seen the Marvel properties revert to the "House of Ideas," Arad could well be looking at getting Morbius, Deadpool, Black Panther, Thor, Ant-Man and Iron Fist – to which Ray (Darth Maul) Parks is reportedly still attached – into development. Then, of course, there's always Nick Fury.

If Arad foregoes major stars, he should be able to bring in a *Black Panther* or *Nick Fury* flick for under $50 million, especially if he also avoids a heavy and unnecessary reliance on special effects.

But what if none of those heroes are part of the deal? We may soon hear the sound of the bottom of the barrel being scraped. Marvel may pride itself on having more than 5,000 properties in its library but how many of them are able to hold their own in comicbooks let alone in the cinema? Anyone want a *Speedball* movie? What about *Wonder Man* or *Black Knight*? *Warlock*? *The Falcon*?

Even Namor and Luke Cage have been acquired by big studios – Universal and Sony/Columbia respectively – so most of Marvel's A-list is taken. If even the characters optioned by Artisan aren't covered, it doesn't leave many bankable heroes for Arad to work with. One thing's for certain, however, given his track record he's sure to pull something worth watching out of the bag. More than likely it'll be several somethings.

French Platinum

Hexagon Comics has inked a deal that gives Platinum Studios the movie and TV rights to 500 characters including Wampus, Kabur, Homicron and the Strangers.

The Hexagon portfolio represents 50 years of French comics history. Most recently licensed by Semic, it has now been acquired by the creators of the heroes, who have formed a syndicate to promote their creations for their own benefit.

Frame to Frame spoke with the Hexagon Syndicate's managing partner, Jean-Marc Lofficier about the deal. "What we – the creators – all hope is that Platinum will succeed in getting some properties to become films or TV or animation series and reward our faith in those characters and our efforts; also, that would provide some cash flow to start publishing again on a more regular basis. For example, Luciano Bernasconi would love to draw new Wampus stories but right now we just don't have the resources to do them."

Lofficier, who said he is already sitting on 60 pages of new material, added, "Black Coat Press plans to compile some of the classic stories into 5x8" black and white trade paperbacks – running to at least 240 pages – in English next year. Sort of like Marvel's **Essentials** series. In some cases these trade paperbacks will contain new stories especially commissioned for that purpose."

It's an intriguing idea and certainly offers Hollywood producers some interestingly different comicbook heroes to check out but, as Lofficier explained, there's another, more worthy factor to take into account. "I can't emphasise enough that those French and Italian artists are like the Kirbys, Hecks, Infantinos, Ayers, Swans etcetera of their times. They never received any credit or money beyond their initial page rate. It is wonderful – and they are indeed thrilled – to become part of this 'adventure'."

And finally...

Todd McFarlane is looking at an early 2006 release for the animated *Spawn* feature he is developing with IDT Entertainment and Film Roman as a direct-to-DVD release.

In keeping with his plans to make the new version bleaker and more scary, he's aiming for an R rating in the US.

Frame to Frame Review

Hardly Ultimate but Super Heroes scores

WHILE the rash of comicbook movies may have done enormously well at the box office, they did next to nothing to improve sales of the source material. If there has been any positive benefit to the four colour medium – beyond increased royalties to the publishers – it has come in the form of a greater acceptance of comics by the mass media.

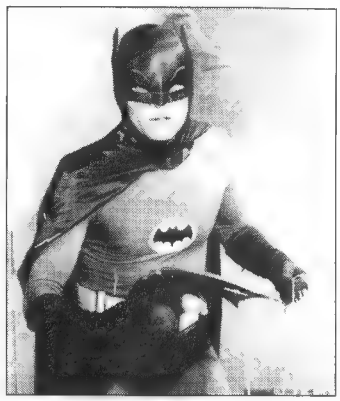
There is still the very occasional "Biff! Bam! Pow!" style of headline – a hangover from the '60s and the oh-so-camp *Batman* TV series – but in the main the increased coverage has taken a more serious tone; at least as serious as you can get when generally discussing grown men running around in skintight spandex outfits. But, as exemplified by a new TV series, it is the film spin-offs that are generating the extra attention rather than comics themselves.

Airing on Bravo in the US on May 26, *Ultimate Super Heroes* is followed on consecutive nights by *Ultimate Super Villains* and *Ultimate Super Vixens*. Only the first of these hour-long programmes – which are narrated by TV's Batman, Adam West – was available for viewing prior to broadcast but it goes a long way to showing just how inextricably linked comics have become with their movie spin-offs, at least in the general consciousness.

All three *Ultimate* programmes are countdown shows featuring a Top 20 voted for by "over 50 experts including Hollywood filmmakers and pioneering comicbook creators." All 20 selections have appeared either in movies or on TV.

The possible choices are culled from movies, video games and comics and its easy to see how the definition of 'super hero' has broadened in the minds of the general public. The Top 20 *Super Heroes* includes the likes of Conan, Luke Skywalker, Indiana Jones and James Bond alongside such mainstays as Hellboy, Spawn, the X-Men, Batman, Superman and Spider-Man.

Well edited, incorporating graphics, comicbook pages and movie clips alongside the talking heads of Stan Lee, Todd McFarlane, George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, *Batman Begins* producer Michael Uslan, *X-Men* director Bryan Singer and such actors as *Hellboy*'s Ron Perlman and Mark (*Star Wars*) Hamill, *Super Heroes* is worth an hour of anybody's time when – and if – it gets a British airing.



Above: Narrator of Ultimate Superheroes *Adam West in his most famous role as Batman, the Caped Crusader from the 1960s TV series.*

It doesn't reveal anything the afficionado won't already know but it does cram in plenty of background. Along the way it mentions how **Fantastic Four** saved Marvel, Roger Corman's godawful *FF* movie, Frank Miller's ground-breaking work on **Daredevil** and how *The Mask* film was nothing like the original Dark Horse comic. When discussing Conan, it refers to the original **Weird Tales** stories as well as Robert E Howard's suicide.

Covering 20 heroes in 60 minutes, there's no way it can be in depth but it does its utmost to avoid being superficial.

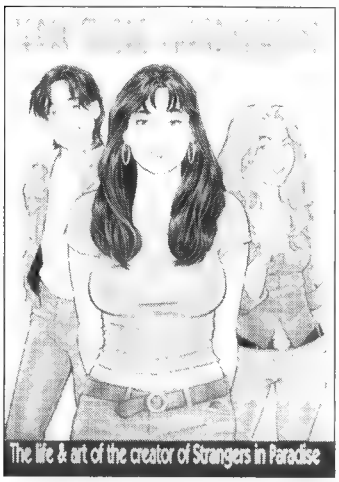
Paradise mislaid

After *Ultimate Super Heroes*, Hero Video's *Terry Moore: Paradise Found* is a bit of a disappointment.

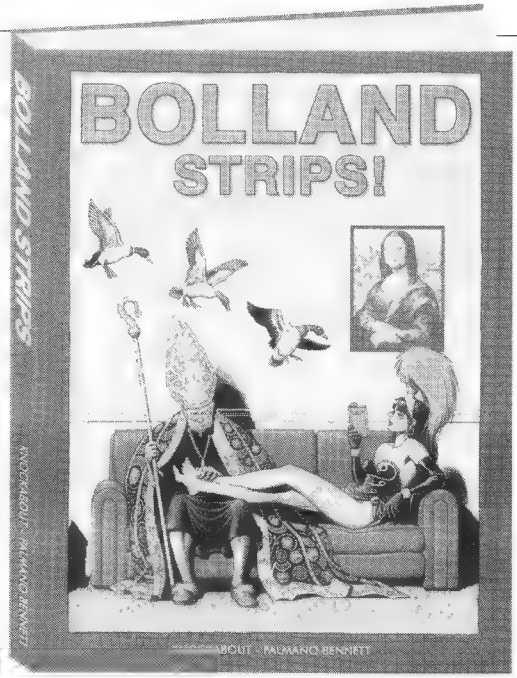
At two hours, the $24.95 DVD – which is subtitled *The Life & Art of the Creator of Strangers in Paradise* – certainly goes into plenty of depth but it's clearly aimed at fans of the writer/artist's long-running Abstract Studio title. It makes little attempt to put the comic or its creator in the context of the medium. As such, *Paradise Found* offers little by way of perspective for the fan of comicbooks in general.

SiP, which sells around 10,000 per issue in the US, has a lot of committed fans. They are likely to enjoy the lengthy Moore interview, gain a lot of insight into his working methods and his previous careers as video editor and rock musician and enjoy his performance of songs from the comic. Anybody else will find it less worthwhile.

One can't help but wonder if this DVD would have been made had Moore and Hero Video not both hailed from Houston.



Above: The cover to Terry Moore: Paradise Found, *a DVD about the life and art of the creator of* ***Strangers in Paradise****.*



BRIAN BOLLAND is acknowledged as one of – if not the – major British artist working in US comics today.

From his early days on undergrounds, **Powerman** and **House of Hammer**, in the late 1970s his clean line and bold inking defined the early look of Judge Dredd before he was lured to DC where he worked with such other imported talent as Alan Moore and Neil Gaiman.

With his art now being almost exclusively on covers for DC, this book presents a rare opportunity to see his more personal work.

Bolland Strips! (ISBN 0-86166-150-8) is a 112 page casebound edition published by Knockabout Palmano Bennett, cover priced £12.99 and in shops now. A collection of his less heroic and more whimsical work it includes a new 20-page *The Actress and the Bishop* story along with their other classic adventures set in a strange suburban idyll.

It also features *Mr Mamoulian*, Bolland's alter ego, an observer rather than an actor in life, who is in a constant state of bemusement at whatever is presented to him.

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What series brought early fame to artist Brian Bolland?

a) Dan Dare
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Please also complete the following:

My five favourite features this issue (please mark in order of preference, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th; no ticks) were:

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___ SEZ DEZ
___ JACK STAFF SERIAL
___ NOVEL GRAPHICS
___ FRAME TO FRAME
___ PREVIEW (ALBION)
___ REVIEWS
___ BIFF'S ILLUMINATIONS
___ ADVANCE LISTINGS
___ NETWORKS
___ Q&A
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PLUS... which of the above is your LEAST favourite, the one you skipped reading, the one you wish we'd replace with a new contender for the top spot:

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The many colours of noir

Novel Graphics by Paul Gravett

Highlighting the latest and best in graphic novels

"WHICHEVER way you turn, fate sticks out its foot to trip you." That was how American director Edward G. Ulmer described the mood of doom in his B-movies, a style that French critics in 1946 dubbed "noir."

Black contains every colour and noir spans a whole spectrum of styles and stories, from detective mysteries to true crime biographies, from police procedurals to gritty urban tragedies. Right now, some of the hottest-selling noir graphic novels flying off the shelves are Dark Horse's new, compact, manga-sized, Chip Kidd-repackaged editions of Frank Miller's **Sin City**. Riding on the back of the movie's smash success, people are discovering the original comics that served as its virtual storyboard and digital set designs.

Now that "civilians" are experiencing just how powerfully the graphic novel medium can serve up some of the hardest of hard-boiled crime fiction, it's good timing to survey some of the history and the other shining examples of the many colours of noir.

Like gangster tale **Road to Perdition**, **Sin City** is yet another wake-up call to the book-buying public that comics, and comics-based movies, are not solely about super-heroes. Actually, crime comics were once one of the post popular, and most contro-versial, genres of American comic books.

Progressive publisher Lev Gleason took on the idea of **Crime Does Not Pay**, the first no-holds-barred "true crime" comic book, from associates and co-editors Charles Biro and Bob Wood in 1942. Unusually, Gleason cut a deal with them, offering a profit-share and total editorial freedom. For all involved, it proved that crime definitely did pay, and in spades.

Hosted by the spectral Mr. Crime in moustache and top hat, the brutal tragedies of real criminals were recounted in dense, enthralling detail, always ending with the comic's dire warning to underline the supposed moral message.

Soon Biro's lurid covers of their **Crime Does Not Pay** were shouting "More Than 6,000,000 Readers Monthly!". Those figures did not represent actual copies sold, but multiplied the number of pass-along readers of each copy. Still it was probably a realistic estimate of the title's massive audience, a market no shrewd publisher could ignore.

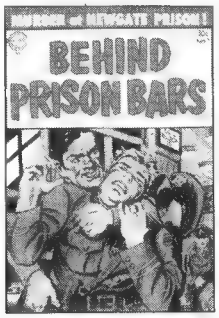
EC's Bill Gaines reckoned that Biro and Wood's monthly was selling four million copies an issue at its peak in the late Forties.

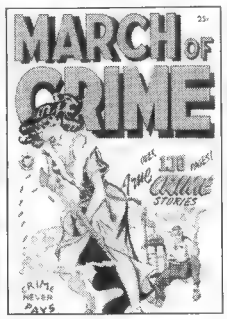
Legend has it that Stan Lee used to phone Biro up and ask, "What's the secret, Charlie?" Biro never told him, but he'd tell his colleagues, "There's no secret. The secret is Charles Biro."

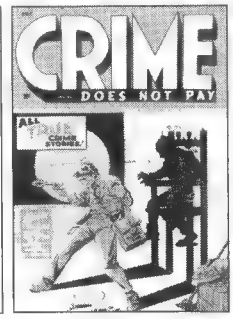
Between 1947 and 1951, there was a short but significant crime comics spree, when the genre's market percentage jumped into double figures, as high as 14% in 1948. But they soon became the scapegoats of the anti-comics campaigners.

After 1955 and the enforcement of the Comics Code's tight controls on violence and specific restraint on using the word "crime" prominently on any cover, the genre withered away, basically disappearing during the whole of the Sixties and beyond. Gil Kane's **Savage** and Jack Kirby's **In the Days of the Mob** magazines both died after one issue. Steranko's "visual novel" **Chandler** in 1976

*Above: Brit-noir in Steve Parkhouse & David Lloyd's Night Raven (**Hulk Comic**, 1979). Facing: Garcia Lopez art from **On the Road to Perdition** (2003).*







Left: ***Behind Prison Bars*** *(1952, Avon)*

March of Crime *#1 (1948, Fox)*

Crime Does Not Pay *#42 (1944, Gleason)*

Crime Reporter *#2 (1948, St John)*

was another lone attempt.

Ever since he discovered the bruising prose of former comics scribe Mickey Spillane at the age of 13, Frank Miller had been creating crime strips of his own, essentially naive attempts at what would mature into **Sin City**. But back in the Seventies he found no takers.

When he tried breaking into comics, the only game in town was "men in tights." It was only after the massive success of **Dark Knight Returns**, a noir Batman, that Miller was given carte blanche to unleash his black-and-white dramas of "knights in dirty armour", which deserve much of the credit for the Nineties crime comics revival.

It is no accident that, in his wake, several of America's finest younger writers, like Bendis, Azzarello, Brubaker and Rucka, are also passionate about noir and detective fiction.

For me, one of Bendis's best graphic novels is one of his earliest, **Torso**, from Image. In 1935, lawman Eliot Ness, the "Untouchable" who put away Capone and the Mob, is eager to pursue his fame and political ambitions as Cleveland's new Safety Director. When a string of mutilated bodies point to America's first serial killer, Ness vows to catch the "Torso Killer". His failure to do so thwarts his career. For this true story co-written with Marc Andreyko, Brian Michael Bendis uses photo collage and stark graphics to recreate this thoroughly researched Thirties case.

Among the most intelligent detective investigations in recent graphic novels must be **Scene of the Crime** by Ed Brubaker, drawn by Michael Lark and Sean Phillips. It had me hooked from the first cliffhanger when it was serialised in 1999 in four issues from Vertigo.

On the mean streets of San Francisco, young Jack Herriman is not your typical hard-boiled private eye. When he was a 12, he was damaged physically and psychologically from witnessing a car bomb that mistakenly claimed the life of his cop father. The explosion also cost him his left eye. Raised by his uncle Knut, a famous crime-scene photographer, Jack grew up drowning himself in drink and drugs and wrecking a romantic relationship.

Sin City is yet another wake-up call to the book-buying public that comics, and comic-based movies, are not solely about superheroes.

Now he is trying to rebuild his life as a detective who refuses to carry a gun. A case comes his way from his father's ex-partner Paul Raymonds. Jack is hired by Alexandra Jordan, a woman he realises is Raymonds' mistress, to find her missing sister Maggie. Jack may think that he has solved this missing-person case when he finds her, but by the next morning she is dead.

Brubaker has said that the inspiration for his plot came from the lives of two sisters he knew when he was in his late teens. He writes that Maggie just wanted "a little piece of goodnight" she had never known as a child; he makes this the book's tender subtitle. While there may be no escape from the damaging mistakes of the past, Brubaker shows how denying them and covering them up drag the Jordan family down even further, and how facing up to them lets Jack start to heal from years of self-torture. I for one still hope Herriman will get more mysteries to solve in the future.

Recently, the Europeans have also served up some strong stories of period noir. For example, **5 is the Perfect Number** by the Italian Igort from Cape tells the story of Peppino, an old-fashioned Mafioso, who is forced out of retirement after his son is murdered by a contract killer disguised as a street mystic.

Betrayed by his own Mafia gang, Peppino learns that the old rules no longer apply and kills his former boss. Igort's two-tone elegance evokes his native Sixties Italy in a tale of one man's need for redemption.

Subtitled *Better Living Through Crime*, the **Miss** paperback from DC's Humanoids line collects the quartet of gritty French albums by writer Philippe Thirault and artists Marc Riou and Mark Vigouroux. The seedy underbelly of New York's roaring Twenties brings together expelled convent girl "Miss" Nola and former Harlem pimp Slim. When their luck and cash run dry, they hook up as guns for hire.

Survival may be more important to them than scruples, but their unusual partnership means that they wind up looking out for each other and slowly, warily, falling in love.

Crime comics are back with a vengeance and a variety never seen before, from David Lapham's heart-breaking **Stray Bullets** to Paul Grist's mickey-taking **Kane**.

Frankly, it would be an absolute crime to ignore them.

AND WHEN I WAS BUT A "LAD," AS LOONEY WOULD HAVE SAID, I HAPPENED TO WITNESS A MURDER COMMITTED BY LOONEY'S SON CONNOR, WHO WAS NOT A LAD....

PG tips

It's hard to keep up with all the upcoming graphic novels, trade paperbacks and other cool items. Here are some pointers to a few noteworthy attractions:

Monographie Lacrymale
(Stéphane Blanquet; Editions de L'An 2) May.....e24.00
You may have caught the supremely creepy graphics of French visionary Blanquet ("blon-kay") in Fantagraphics anthologies **Blab!** and **Zero Zero**, but here you get a sumptuous 128-page adults-only feast of his paintings, animation, dolls, bedroom installation, drawings on nude models, and of course his comics, rounded out with an interview, critiques and bibliography. A "tearful monograph" that truly brings tears to the eyes, and yes, it's bilingual.
...www.editionsdelan2.com

Lolajean Riddle
(John Dunning & Mardou; Mardouville) May.....£2.50
Teasing and moody, influenced by Lynch and Clowes, this 33-page psychodrama is told in two parts, in two voices, from two perspectives. Let yourself be pulled inside the desires and dreams of sultry freelance illustrator Lolajean, self-mythologiser and pornographer, and of an enigmatic Hollywood-bound writer she meets in a motel. This debut collaboration shows real daring and talent. **...www.mardouville.com**

Parting Ways
(Andrew Foley, Scott Mooney & Nick Craine; Speakeasy Comics) July.....$12.99
Join Peter Orbach's zany journey and "near-life experiences" travelling through a new streamlined purgatory, where "hell's become one big karma wash". A witty script and promising art in this 152-page romp. Sample pages at Mooney's site www.moon-man.com
...www.avodahbooks.com

Capote in Kansas
(Ande Parks & Chris Samnee; Oni Press) July.....$12.99
Troubled author Truman Capote established the 'whydunnit" with his controversial true murder novel **In Cold Blood**. This intriguing 128-page biographical insight explores how he came to research and write his landmark study of the US nightmare and the price he paid for it. A slice of literary noir **...www.onipress.com**

The Alchemist's Easel
(Al Davison; Active Images) July.....$17.99
Lucid, symbolic, revelatory, dreams can be all these things when translated into comics. This 176-page collection of dream-inspired comics at their very best is from the author of **The Spiral Cage**. Visit www.astralgypsy.com to find out more. Sleep tight**...www.activeimages.com**

Smoke
(Alex de Campi & Igor Kordey; IDW) May-July.....$7.49
A financially and morally bankrupt government, a wave of bizarre terrorism, and a soldier boy turned official assassin, all thrown together in a disturbingly plausible near-future London. This comes in three 48-page monthly chunks of barbed satire and steely intelligence. A health warning – Smoke is good for you.
...www.idwpublishing.com

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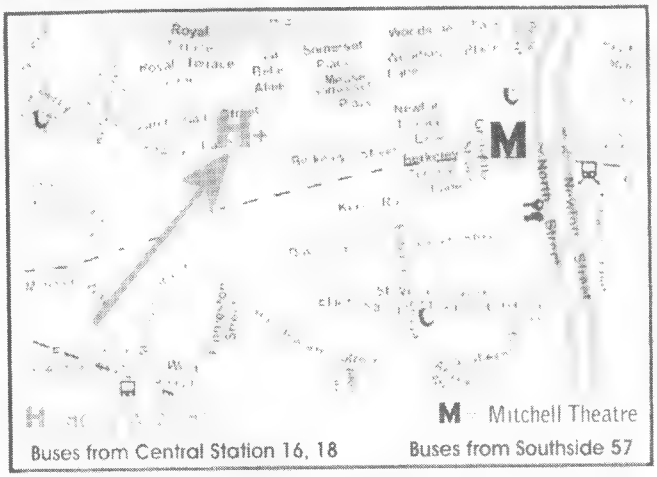

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Baffle us with comics questions, or save us with answers!

Iron Man

Robert Menzies
10 Cumnock Drive, Barrhead
Glasgow G78 2HT

I WAS wondering what happened to the fantastic life-size statue of Iron Man that stood in the long-bankrupt Marvel Mania theme restaurant that was in Universal City, Los Angeles, California.

Anyone know?

Moonshadows

Christine Harper via e-mail

ARE there any plans to make a second volume of **Moonshadows**, the 1998 sketchbook dedicated to the inestimable artistry of Michael Ploog?

Or any other similar projects showcasing his amazing talents?

Cost

Mike Molcher, Harrogate

HAS anyone ever quantified the actual cost of the collapse of the comics market in the 1990s, in terms of books cancelled, jobs lost and comic companies shrinking?

Warren

Andy Jones, Rainhill, Merseyside

WILL there ever be an extensive chronological reprinting of the Warren comics?

If anybody can help with the above batch of questions for next month... we'll all be amazed!

Answer Updates

Readers provide answers for previous issues' questions

TV21 reprints to continue? Q: CI #184

Q&A Brains Trust's Lew Stringer to the rescue...

I PRESUME Peter Sidebotham was referring to **TV21 Classic Comic Strips**, published by Carlton Books a few years ago? I've heard nothing about a sequel, and Carlton has since been absorbed by Granada Ventures, which now owns the license for *Thunderbirds* and the other old ITC shows.

The classic *TV Century 21* strips of the 1960s (fantastic artwork by Mike Noble, Frank Bellamy, Gerry Embleton and others) certainly deserve to be seen by a modern audience. Many of those strips were reprinted in the Nineties in Fleetway's **Thunderbirds The Comic**, as you may know. The only Gerry Anderson-related comic currently on the stands (Redan's **Thunderbirds**) is pitched at a much younger readership and those classic strips would be out of place there.

It's a shame that apparently no publisher has yet acquired the rights to produce a comic strip version of Gerry Anderson's *New Captain Scarlet*, the CGI series currently showing on ITV on Saturday mornings. *TV21* reprints would be ideal back-up material for a Captain Scarlet comic. 30 years ago, anthology comics like **Look-In** or **TV Action** would have such a strip running by now, and if it didn't prove popular the comic would continue with a replacement strip.

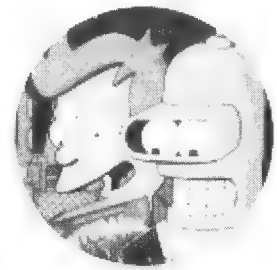
However, these days license holders often want their properties to have their own comic/magazine, rather than share a title with other characters. Therefore, the risk factor is higher for the publisher as sales hinge on the popularity of one character. Misjudge the appeal of a character and you end up with a disaster – **Zig and Zag**, for example, which ran for just two issues, as I recall.

Orson Welles in comics, Q: CI #184

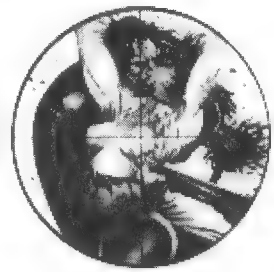
Reuben Willmott, Ipswich

WITH regard to Christine Harper's question in **CI** #184 about Orson Welles: although Will Eisner was referred to in the answer given, his Spirit strip of September 28th 1947 called *UFO* (which can be found in Volume 15 of DC's grossly over-priced **The Spirit Archives** series) was not mentioned.

The story concerns producer/director/writer/leading star Awesome Belles, who is visited by a Martian wanting help with the forthcoming invasion of Earth. It ends with Belles flying off to Mars in a hot air balloon (like you do) to stop the invasion!



PUSH ALL THE RIGHT BUTTONS



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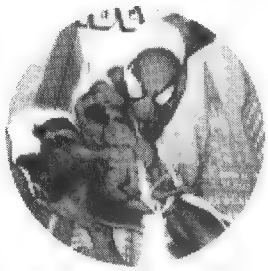

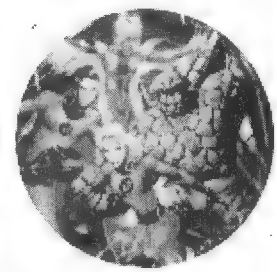

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The following are 32 page colour titles unless stated

ON SALE FROM
JULY 6

Dark Horse

new **Serenity** 1 (Joss Whedon + Brett Matthews & Will Conrad + Laura Martin) The crew of Serenity once again finds itself broke and on the wrong side of a number of very large firearms. $2.99

Star Wars: Empire 35 *(A Model Officer;* John Jackson Miller & Brian Ching + Michael Atiyeh) Information obtained from a prisoner captured on Jabiim has set Darth Vader on the trail of the Rebel Fleet. No Alliance defence can divert Vader from his target, and if he is successful it will mean the destruction of the fleet and the end of the Rebellion. $2.99

DC Comics

Aquaman 32 (John Arcudi & Patrick Gleason + Christian Alamy) Black Manta is back! Aquaman's deadliest enemy returns with all the power, resources and legal protection of a muti-national corporation behind him! $2.50

one-shot **The Authority: Human on the Inside** (John Ridley & Ben Oliver; sb) The US President sets a plan in motion that could destroy the Authority from the inside. It's a plan so cunning and unexpected, it'll shake the Authority to its very core! Mature. 96pg $17.99

Batman: Dark Detective 5 (of 6; Steve Englehart & Marshall Rogers + Terry Austin) Silver St Cloud has been abducted by the Joker so that her boyfriend, Evan Gregory, will drop out of the Gotham gubernatorial race. . $2.99

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 193 *(Snow* 2 of 5; J.H. Williams III & Dan Curtis Johnson + Seth Fisher) Even Batman can't be everywhere, so he has recruited a strikeforce of experts with their own disciplines. But will their expertise be enough against the obsessed Mr Freeze? $2.50

Blood of the Demon 5 (John Byrne + Will Pfeifer & Byrne + Nekros) Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman attempt to track down Jason Blood, who is dedicated to ensuring that Etrigan can never be freed again! $2.50

DC Special: The Return of Donna Troy 2 (of 4; Phil Jimenez & José Luis García-López + George Pérez) A cosmic commute to an otherworldly battleground brings the Teen Titans and the Outsiders face-to-face with their long-mourned friend Donna Troy. There's just one problem: She's not the Donna they remember! $2.99

one-shot **The Dead Boy Detectives Digest** (Jill Thompson) Charles Rowland and Edwin Paine, the dead British teenagers who are always on the run from Death, travel stateside to solve a missing persons case. Features a free eight-page preview of T'k. Mature. 144pg b&w $9.99

Firestorm 15 *(Secret Origins* 1 of 2; Stuart Moore & Jamal Igle + Rob Stull) Firestorm is settling into his new life and job at STAR Labs Detroit when a new villain crashes into town seeking revenge: The Pionic Man! $2.50

The Intimates 9 (Joe Casey & Giuseppe Camuncoli + Sandra Hope) Summer vacation continues – but for Punchy and Destra, this will be a vacation like no other! There's a mystery to be solved, and they can't do it alone. $2.99

one-shot **JLA/Cyberforce** (Joe Kelly & Doug Mahnke + Norm Rapmund) When Cyber-Zombies invade Budapest, the JLA and Cyberforce teams arrive to answer the call for help. Co-published with Top Cow. 48pg $5.99

JSA 75 *(Black Vengeance* 3 of 3; Geoff Johns & Leonard Kirk + Keith Champagne) The Spectre's true target is revealed as he faces off against the power of the Thunderbolt and the might of the JSA. But vengeance will be had, and it may tear apart the JSA! 40pg $2.99

Justice League Unlimited 11 (Adam Beechen & Carlo Barberi + Walden Wong) The Justice League pays a visit to Aquaman in Atlantis, but their trip is interrupted as a seaquake awakens an ancient evil! $2.25

Looney Tunes 128 (various) When Porky and Daffy become used-car dealers, it's hard to tell who's more crooked – they or the bank robbers posing as their customers! $2.25

MAD 456 (The Usual Gang of Idiots) Movie parodies, gags, laughs, and non-stop hilarity. 48pg $3.50

Madara Vol 4 (Eiji Otsuka & Sho-u Tajima; *CMX)* Illustrated by the designer of Kill Bill Vol 1's animated sequences! Madara has defied the prophecy, choosing to live the normal life of a peaceful villager. A second Kusanagi sword combined with his own could determine the fate of the war, but Madara has had enough of using his deadly powers. Mature. 198pg b&w $9.99

Matador 3 (of 6; Devin Grayson & Brian Stelfreeze) Lieutenant Isabel Cardona's investigation of a deadly serial killer gets personal! Neither of Izzy's lovers is powerful enough to keep her safe once she's connected to the Matador, and the stakes are raised when calamity strikes, cutting down someone close to her heart! $2.99

Son of Vulcan 2 (of 6; Scott Beatty & Keron Grant) Kid sidekick Mikey Devante hasn't even begun his training as apprentice to the fire-wielding hero known as Vulcan, but he's already found his way to the Forge – Vulcan's high-tech headquarters – and helped himself to a collection of Vulcan's state-of-the-art weaponry. $2.99

one-shot **Space Ghost** (Joe Kelly & Ariel Olivetti; tpb) *See Close-Up, below.*

Superman: That Healing Touch (Greg Rucka + Geoff Johns & various; tpb) Collecting Adventures of Superman #633-638, plus the lead story from Superman Secret Files 2004. As Lois recovers from her Mid-east ordeal, Superman gets a visit from Mr Mxyzptlk and receives harsh words from Wonder Woman and Batman in the wake of Identity Crisis. 168pg $14.99

Superman 219 *(Sacrifice* 1 of 4; Mark Verheiden & Ed Benes) Brainiac knows all of the Man of Steel's secrets, and he's putting that knowledge to use in a lethal fashion. Is Superman about to lose another piece of his humanity? .. $2.50

Swamp Thing 17 *(Healing the Breach* 3 of 4; Joshua Dysart & Enrique Breccia) Why do the strange bio-mech invaders in the infected Green look so similar to the sea monster who dwells in the trenches of the poisoned Mexico basin? Mature readers. $2.99

Villains United 3 (of 6; Gail Simone & Val Semeiks + Wade von Grawbadger) The rogue villain group known as The Six engage in a brutal, life-altering confrontation with The Society, and a possible traitor stands revealed! $2.50

Y: The Last Man 35 *(Girl on Girl* 4 of 4; Brian K. Vaughan & Goran Sudzuka + José Marzan Jr.) The good ship Whale makes its final stand against the crew's heavily armed pursuers, and countless women meet a watery grave. Will any of Yorick's companions survive? Mature readers. $2.99

Marvel

Amazing Fantasy 10 (Fred Van Lente & Leonard Kirk + Federica Manfredi) The all-new Scorpion successfully infiltrates Advanced Idea Mechanics but gets more than she bargains for when her first mission for A.I.M. is one of assassination. $2.99

Combat Zone: True Tales of GIs in Iraq (Karl Zinsmeister & Dan Jurgens; tpb) A chronicle of three months in the lives of the 82nd Airborne in the Battle for Iraq in this ground-breaking series. 120pg $19.99

Daredevil vs Punisher 2 *(Means and Ends* 2 of 6; Dave Lapham; *Marvel Knights)* As tension mounts in the city and an innocent civilian family is confronted by thugs, the Punisher begins a one-man killing spree, slicing through the Mafia with a reckless abandon. $2.99

Exiles 66 *(Destroy All Monsters* 1 of 3; Tony Bedard & James Calafiore) Old teammates are buried, and the search for a way to heal another brings the Exiles face to gruesome face with some of the fiercest monsters in Marvel Universe history! $2.99

new **Fantastic Four: House of M** 1 (of 3; John Layman & Scot Eaton) The trusted advisor at Magneto's right hand is almost certainly the second most powerful man in the world. But the question is, will second-best be enough for Victor Von Doom? $2.99

G.L.A. 4 (of 4; Dan Slott & Paul Pelletier) This issue doesn't just signal the end for the GLA, but possibly for others from the Marvel Universe. $2.99

House of M 3 (of 8; Brian Michael Bendis & Olivier Coipel) Follow Wolverine as he tries to piece together the mystery of the House of M, but first he must figure out – who are his friends and who are foes? $2.99

Incredible Hulk 83 *(The Last Refuge* 1 of 4; Peter David & Jorge Lucas) In the Australian outback, Bruce Banner has found a peace he's never known amongst a tribe of Aborigines. $2.99

new **Iron Man: House of M** 1 (of 3; Greg Pak & Pat Lee) Tony Stark is the smartest, most successful Sapien on the planet – the best and brightest of a dying species. Does it bother him that the House of M uses the technology produced by Tony's multi-billion-dollar company to keep Sapiens down? $2.99

Marvel Adventures Spider-Man 5 (Sean Mckeever & Patrick Scherberger) With the juice that runs New York City in his hands, the world will learn that Electro isn't one to be trifled with! $2.50

Marvel Team-Up 10 *(Master of the Ring;* Robert Kirkman & Scott Kolins) The Ringmaster faces the combined might of Spider-Man, Moon Knight, and Daredevil – with the fate of the world hanging in the balance. $2.99

Ororo: Before the Storm 2 (of 4; Marc Sumerak & Carlo Barberi) When an archaeologist in search of an ancient Egyptian artefact seeks the services of Achmed El-Gibar's band of thieves to aid his cause, you can bet that El-Gibar's prize pupil will be leading the pack! $2.99

Shanna, The She-Devil 6 (of 7; Frank Cho; *Marvel Knights)* Shanna stumbles into the middle of a mass migration of razor-toothed raptors, each of which would love to make her an afternoon snack, and has to slice her way to freedom! Mature readers. $3.50

Spider-Girl 88 *(Family Business* 3 of 3; Tom Defalco & Ron Frenz) Even as a Skrull Worldship threatens Fantastic Five Headquarters, Spider-Girl and Franklin Richards race into the Negative Zone to prevent Apox the Omega Skrull from destroying the original Fantastic Four. $2.99

Spider-Man Unlimited 10 (Marc Sumerak + M.E. Macuaga & Greg Tocchini + Pia Guerra) How far will J. Jonah Jameson's new intern go in order to get in good with the old man? And then, can Peter Parker inadvertently save the city from a suicide bomber? $2.99

one-shot **The Thing: Freakshow** (Geoff Johns & Sott Kolins; tpb) Ben Grimm has bad luck. He never got the grades, he never got the girl and Cosmic Rays shoved the ugly stick down his throat. But where did this stroke of bad luck come from? Collects The Thing: Freakshow #1-4 plus the

close-up

Space Ghost

DC Comics

Writer: Joe Kelly

Artist: Ariel Olivetti

Collects the six-issue Space Ghost miniseries. For the first time, learn how Space Ghost acquired his power bands and why he protects the galaxy from evil! And witness the tragic circumstances that led to his donning a cowl and his first battle with archnemesis Zorak! 144pg $14.99

ON SALE JULY 6

Thing & She-Hulk: The Long Night one shot. 144pg $17.99

Ultimate Fantastic Four 21 *(Crossover* 1 of 3; Mark Millar & Greg Land) Reed Richards has used his scientific genius to contact an Earth in a surprisingly familiar parallel dimension – and he's ready to visit! $2.50

Ultimate Spider-Man 79 *(Warriors* 1 of 6; Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley) The Kingpin is in retreat – and that power vacuum won't last long. It's about to be filled by a figure of unabashed dread in the underworld: Hammerhead! $2.50

Uncanny X-Men 462 *(Season of the Witch* 1 of 4; Chris Claremont & Alan Davis) Brian Braddock is released from his duties as protector of the Omniverse to deal with a threat of even greater proportions – as if that was even possible! $2.50

one-shot **X-Men: The New Age of Apocalypse** (various; tpb) Now that Apocalypse has been destroyed and the end of the world has been averted, what could possibly pose a threat to Magneto and his X-Men? Collects X-Men: Age of Apocalypse #1-6 and the X-Men: Age of Apocalypse one shot. 200pg $20.99

ON SALE FROM

JULY 13

Dark Horse

Blade of the Immortal 103 *(Pity;* Hiroaki Samura) After joining the surviving Ittō-ryū warriors on a quest for vengeance, a chance encounter leads Abayama to a face-off with Makoto, the youngest Mugai-ryū conspirator and Abayama's former assistant. b&w $2.99

Man with the Screaming Brain 3 (Bruce Campbell + David Goodman & Rick Remender + Hilary Barta) Campbell's dead wife returns as a robot who's more in love with the cab driver hiding inside her husband's brain than the man himself. $2.99

Michael Chabon Presents The Amazing Adventures of the Escapist 7 (Michael Chabon & Eduardo Barreto + Paul Hornschemeier) Introducing the mysterious Mr Machine Gun, a character torn straight from the pages of Chabon's The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay. 80pg $8.95

DC Comics

100 Bullets 62 *(Staring at the Son* 3; Brian Azzarello & Eduardo Risso) The family reunion continues on the sun-bleached streets of Miami. Benito continues his education, discovering where he fits in with the Trust. But will he follow in his father's footsteps or shun his deadly birthright? Mature. ... $2.50

Action Comics 829 *(Sacrifice* 2 of 4; Gail Simone & John Byrne + Nelson) Superman battles Darkseid in a fight for his life! And the Man of Steel is even pitted against his allies in the JLA as he struggles to defeat his foe and keep his loved ones safe! But is an even deadlier villain behind it all? $2.50

new **All Star Batman and Robin, the Boy Wonder** 1 (Frank Miller & Jim Lee + Scott Williams) All hell breaks loose at the circus as millionaire Bruce Wayne and gal pal Vicki Vale witness a young boy's life shattered before their eyes. Variant cover. .. $2.99

Batman 642 (Andersen Gabrych & Chris Marrinan + Andrew Pepoy) The Mad Hatter's implant is driving Killer Croc mental! Can Batman save the reptilian rogue before he shreds himself into an early grave? $2.25

The Batman Strikes! 11 (Bill Matheny & Christopher Jones + Terry Beatty) The Penguin's got Batman on the ropes. Alfred may be the only hope Batman has, but even this newer, stranger dynamic duo may not be able to save Gotham City! $2.25

Breach 7 (Bob Harras & Marcos Martin + Alvaro Lopez) It's the fallout from the Rifter incursion into New York State, and things aren't looking good for Breach! To make things worse, he has to save one of the people he can trust the least! . $2.50

Desolation Jones 2 (Warren Ellis & J.H. Williams III) Desolation Jones delves deep into the rancid side of LA's spook community as he searches for answers – and a missing girl – in his search for a film that too many people are interested in. Mature readers. $2.99

Fables 39 (Bill Willingham & Lan Medina + Craig Hamilton) While Boy Blue is questing through the Homelands, Fabletown is having major issues of its own. Someone has been divulging war secrets and strategies to the enemy, and when the culprit is discovered, the consequences are shocking. Mature readers. $2.50

From Eroica With Love Vol 4 (Aoike Yasuko; *CMX)* Major Eberbach has been ordered to hire international playboy thief Eroica to steal military secrets for NATO in Rome! But Eroica's ego demands a bigger prize than mere documents! 224pg b&w $9.99

Green Arrow 52 *(Heading into the Light* 1 of 4; Judd Winick & Tom Fowler + Rodney Ramos) Green Arrow faces off against an old villain who's suddenly become much more deadly. His name is Doctor Light, and he wants revenge on the heroes who violated his mind! $2.50

Hawkman 42 (Justin Gray + Jimmy Palmiotti & Joe Bennett + Ruy Jose) In the wake of Hawkman's murder, St. Roch is overrun by crime – and Hawkgirl is unaware of how close she is to death at the hands of the newly resurrected Pilgrim! $2.50

JLA 116 *(Crisis of Conscience* 2 of 5; Geoff Johns + Allan Heinberg & Chris Batista + Mark Farmer) Armed with the memories of what once was, the Secret Society of Super-Villains is back and out for blood – literally – as they battle the JLA with the blackest of magic. $2.25

Majestic 7 (Dan Abnett + Andy Lanning & Neil Googe + Trevor Scott) Even if Majestic were alive, Earth is beyond salvation! The world has been conquered by a new breed of Daemonites who are about to use ancient Kheran technology to transform the planet into a world where only they can survive. $2.99

Mnemovore 4 (of 6; Hans Rodionoff & Ray Fawkes + Mike Huddleston) While Kaley struggles to reconnect the fragments of her former life and make sense of what's happening to her, she is betrayed on all sides. Mature readers. $2.99

Nightwing 110 (Devin Grayson & Phil Hester + Ande Parks) Dick Grayson hasn't been in Blüdhaven since everything in his life fell apart. Now, he must return to ensure the city's inner evil hasn't taken over. $2.25

one-shot **Promethea Covers Book** (J.H. Williams III & Mick Gray; *America's Best Comics)* Collecting every Promethea cover by J.H. Williams III and Mick Gray, plus an essay by Williams. 48pg $5.99

The Rann/Thanagar War 3 (of 6; Dave Gibbons & Ivan Reis + Marc Campos) As the universe continues to feel the deadly effects of the war between worlds, the battle takes a decidedly personal turn that may turn hero against hero. $2.50

Scooby-Doo 98 (various) Little old ladies are always hiring Mystery, Inc to check out haunted houses. So why does their latest client seem disappointed when they scare off the ghosts? $2.25

Seven Soldiers: Guardian 3 (of 4; Grant Morrison & Cameron Stewart) Century Hollow – a secret project in the American heartland – is an artificial town created and maintained as a very unusual experiment. A bizarre terrorist group seizes control of the project, and only The Guardian has any chance of saving the people of Century Hollow. The only question is, should he? $2.99

Y: The Last Man Vol 5 *(Ring of Truth;* Brian K. Vaughan & Pia Guerra + José Marzan, Jr.) Collecting issues 24-31. Yorick's unbalanced sister Hero tracks him to San Francisco, only to find him seemingly succumbing to the male-killing plague after losing his still-unused engagement ring to agents of the Setauket Ring. Mature readers. 144pg ... $14.99

Marvel

Captain America Vol 1 *(Out of Time;* Ed Brubaker & Steve Epting + Michael Lark) Cap is awakened in the dead of the night by agents of S.H.I.E.L.D., who need the kind of help only he can provide. But the corpse he finds on the Heli-carrier brings him face-to-face with the unthinkable, and opens doors to terror and manipulation he never dreamed possible! Collects Captain America #1-7. 176pg $21.99

one-shot **Essential Killraven** Vol 1 (various; tpb) Relive the sequel to HG Wells's masterpiece as a sword-wielding slave leads a band of fearless freedom fighters against Earth's alien overlords! Collects Amazing Adventures Vol 2 #18-39, Marvel Team-Up #45, Marvel Graphic Novel #7, and Killraven #1. 504pg $16.99

Gravity 2 (of 5; Sean McKeever & Mike Norton) So, you've moved to the city, settled in and enjoyed your first victory against a notorious super villain. Now what's a freshly-minted super hero to do? Why, you find yourself a seasoned veteran to show you the ropes and offer sage advice. $2.99

Hercules 4 (of 5; Frank Tieri & Mark Texeira; *Marvel Knights)* Hercules has picked up the gauntlet thrown down by King Eurytheses and then some – he's completed eight of the Twelve Labours set before him. Mature readers. $2.99

Marvel Knights 4 #20 (Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Valentine Delandro; *Marvel Knights)* The conflict between the Family Fantastic and the Inhumans heats up with Black Bolt and Medusa's arrival on Earth. $2.99

Marvel Knights 4 Vol 3 *(Divine Time;* Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Jim Muniz) Around the globe, the very fabric of time is unravelling. Minutes are vanishing from days, and objects from the past are materialising in the present. Collects Marvel Knights 4 #13-18. 144pg $14.99

Marvel Masterworks: The X-Men Vol 5 (various) No sooner has their mentor, Professor X, died than who shows up but Magneto and the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants! Only a study in teamwork with Earth's Mightiest Heroes can help our grieving heroes make the grade! Collects X-Men (Vol 1) #43-53, Avengers (Vol 1) #53 and selections from Ka-Zar #2, #3 and Marvel Tales #30. 304pg .. $49.99

Marvel Nemesis: The Imperfects 3 (of 6; Greg Pak & Renato Arlem) Using his alien technology, Dr Niles Van Roekel transforms a group of rejects into a new team of savage superheroes. But what's Van Roekel's master plan? $2.99

new **Mutopia X** 1 (of 5; David Hine & Lan Medina) Special investigator of human and mutant affairs, Ismael Ortega, teams up with ordinary cop, Lucas Bishop, to make sure

Illuminations

Highlights from July's releases

Selected by Martin "Biff" Averre

One of the biggest-selling franchise characters for my stores is Emily The Strange. Until now this has been t-shirts, clothing, watches and various assorted merchandise, but never a comicbook. Dark Horse is now bringing her to life in the first of many, I hope, one-shots. **Emily The Strange** #1 (The Boring Issue) will be in black and white with spot red colouring and the occasional burst of full colour. The 48-page issue will contain several short stories about this 13-year old brooding girl. I don't expect it to fly off the shelves in one frenzied rush, but this will sell and sell and the first printing will soon go for huge sums on eBay, mark my words! **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Also from Dark Horse is another Tony Millionaire hard-cover, **Little and Large**, featuring more whimsical tales for adults and children... such as Uncle Gabby trying to find a home for a displaced spider when its tree gets chopped down. I cannot recommend this highly enough and a 40-page hardcover for only £4.95 can't be bad! **Sales 3/5 Quality 5/5**

Jim Lee, having woven his sales magic with first Batman and then Superman, has now teamed up with man of the moment Frank Miller (currently basking in the success of the *Sin City* film) to pencil **All Star Batman and Robin**. This new series launches with a two-cover #1 which will push an already assured top-seller even higher. The series kicks off at the very beginning, with a visit to the circus by Bruce Wayne and an imaginative reinvention ensues. Need I say more? **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Geoff Johns is riding an artistic high at the moment, scripting DC top-sellers **Green Lantern**, **JSA**, **JLA**, **The Flash** and **Teen Titans**. Now add the first story arc for the new series, **JSA Classified**. At last we find out the origin of Power Girl. And if that's not enough to make you buy the issue then I must be a Frenchman's uncle. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

DC is really a powerhouse of creativity at the moment and all its imprints have top-selling fun projects. Vertigo joins in the laffs this month with a new Jill Thompson Sandman-related manga tale, **The Dead Boy Detective Manga Digest**. Back in the summer of 2003 **Death At Deaths Door** proved a big seller and I expect no less from this digest. What is even better than a big seller in the month of release? A book like this that will have a shelf life of years. It's the holy grail of comics retailing. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Marvel is pinning its hopes on *House of M* being its big event of the year. Interest is building, but as yet not quite reaching the fever pitch of excitement generated by DC's **Countdown to Infinite Crisis**. Time will tell but watch out for all the related tie-ins and miniseries – as yet no clue as to which is the most crucial and since half of the output this month is House of M related, it's truly difficult to know where to start. Therefore I direct you to a non-House of M title, **Daredevil vs Punisher**, a six-issue mini by David Lapham. Dave is the master of gritty hard-hitting noir stories, check out **Stray Bullets**, and if anyone can do this justice, it's him. **Sales 4/5 Quality 5/5**

Top-selling indie will be the long-awaited **Lenore** #12. This title continually sells every month. All previous eleven issues are kept in print and sell and sell as do the two collected trades. So the big question for me is how heavily to order? I think heavily. This dark title appeals to a whole sub-culture who are literally gagging for this issue. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

terrorists from the Human Resistance Movement don't kill hundreds by sabotaging a glamorous movie premiere! $2.99

new **New Avengers** Vol 1 *(Breakout;* Brian Michael Bendis & David Finch) In the wake of the systematic destruction of the original Avengers, just what sort of threat to the world could persuade Captain America to assemble an all-new team? Collects New Avengers #1-6. 160pg $19.99

New Thunderbolts 10 *(Purple Reign* 1 of 3; Fabian Nicieza & Tom Grummett) Everything you thought you knew could very well be WRONG! Songbird and Swordsman are on the run with all of Manhattan against them – but when they reach the Thunderbolts, will they find friends or foes? $2.99

New Warriors 2 (of 6; Zeb Wells & Skottie Young) A small town is terrorised by exotic animals who have taken over the local zoo. Can the Warriors save the day *and* guarantee that no animals will be harmed in the making of this issue? $2.99

Nyx 6 (Joe Quesada & Robert Teranishi) Kiden, Tat, Cameron and X-23 begin to uncover the what's and why's of their strange union, all the while unaware of Zebra Daddy's young errand boy on their trail. Mature readers. $2.99

Powers 13 (Brian Michael Bendis & Michael Avon Oeming) Powers are dropping out of the sky, leaving bloody bodies in their wake. When one of the victims is revealed to be the cosmic guardian of our galaxy, Homicide Detectives Christian Walker and Deena Pilgrim find themselves knee deep in cosmic doo. Mature readers. $2.95

Punisher 23 *(Up Is Down And Black Is White* 5 of 6; Garth Ennis & Leandro Fernandez; *Max Comics)* Frank Castle's having a rough day: After taking two blasts to the chest from a sawed-off 12-gauge – courtesy of Nick Cavella's lethal and not-so-lovely goon Teresa - he falls into the clutches of Agent O'Brien, a renegade spook who carries a major torch for the Punisher. $2.99

Spider-Man: Breakout 4 (of 5; Tony Bedard & Manuel Garcia) With a Brooklyn housing project held hostage by Crossfire's psychotic mind-control gang, and hundreds of innocent lives at the mercy of the Controller, the Mandrill and the Corruptor, Spider-Man finally learns the awful truth behind the supervillain gang war terrorising his city. $2.99

Toxin 4 (of 6; Peter Milligan & Darick Robertson) The answer to all Pat's burning questions – like how to rein in a destructive, immature alien residing in his body – becomes crystal-clear. $2.99

Ultimate X-Men 61 *(Magnetic North* 1 of 5, Brian K. Vaughan & Stuart Immonen) When teenage mutant Lorna Dane accidentally commits a horrific crime, will the X-Men protect her, or leave her to the fury of S.H.I.E.L.D.? $2.50

Ultimate X-Men Vol 11 *(The Most Dangerous Game;* Brian K. Vaughan & Stuart Immonen) It's the ultimate reality show as mutants convicted of capital crimes are released on an island where contestants hunt them down. Collects Ultimate X-Men #54-57. 96pg ... $9.99

Ultimates 2 #7 (Mark Millar & Bryan Hitch) As Captain America leads the team into action, the mysterious traitor makes a move that will forever alter the life of one of the Ultimates – in the most horrifying way possible. Mature readers. $2.99

new **Weapon X: Days of Future Now** 1 (of 5; Frank Tieri & Bart Sears) The War of the Programs is over and now Director Malcolm Colcord is ready to take his plans to the next level! $2.99

X-Men: The End – Heroes and Martyrs 5 (of 6; Chris Claremont & Sean Chen) What is behind the long-concealed link between Gambit and Mr Sinister, and what will it mean for Gambit and Rogue's children? $2.99

X-Men: Golgotha (Peter Milligan & Salvador Larroca; tpb) The X-Men travel to Antarctica to respond to an S.O.S. from a colony of mutants, and what they find is far more shocking than they expected! Collects X-Men #166-170. 120pg $12.99

ON SALE FROM

JULY 20

Dark Horse

Billy The Kid's Old Timey Oddities 4 (Eric Powell & Kyle Hotz) Sprouse and his companions are able to escape from their bonds, but with the monstrous villagers mindlessly obeying Dr Frankenstein's every word, none of them can escape from the lab. $2.99

Conan 18 (Kurt Busiek + Fabian Nicieza & John Severin + Bruce Timm) Conan's destiny is misinterpreted by a series of luckless warriors and shameless opportunists, leading to nothing but misery. $2.99

The Goon 13 (Eric Powell) After his adventures in the dimension of the flesh-eating eye and his brutal battle with Dr Alloy's army of killer robots, the uptown police take the opportunity to haul Goon off to Cade's Island Penitentury to rot for the rest of his days. $2.99

Hellboy: The Island 2 (Mike Mignola) Though it may cost him his life, Hellboy learns the secret history of the world, the origin of the Ogdru Jahad, and his own right hand. $2.99

DC Comics

100 Bullets Vol 8 *(The Hard Way;* Brian Azzarello & Eduardo Risso; tpb) Reprinting 100 Bullets #50-58, unravelling the tangled mystery of the Trust as Wylie Times becomes the latest Minuteman to be reactivated by the Trust's one-time enforcer Agent Graves. Mature readers. 224pg $14.99

Adventures of Superman 642 *(Sacrifice* 3 of 4; Greg Rucka & Karl Kerschl) As Darkseid and Granny Goodness amp up the danger to all those around Superman, will he have to take matters into his own hands by becoming judge, jury and executioner? ... $2.50

The Authority: Revolution 10 (of 12; Ed Brubaker & Dustin Nguyen + Richard Friend) Long thought dead, Henry Bendix has secretly been running the world for years! Now the Authority is back - under new leadership – and they're on a collision course with their ex-Weatherman! Mature. $2.99

Batgirl 66 (Andersen Gabrych & Andy Kuhn) In search of her mother's identity, Cassandra hits the open road. But a quick rest stop leads to a furious, superpowered throwdown, as Batgirl comes face-to-face with the leather-clad Verraco - the Road Hog! ... $2.50

Batman: Gotham Knights 67 (A.J. Lieberman & Rick Burchett + Alvaro Lopez) Batman's battle with Hush for the life of Poison Ivy may be over, but a surprising ramification to Bruce Wayne's life may publicly compromise his secret identity! $2.50

Batman: Jekyll & Hyde 4 (of 6; Paul Jenkins & Sean Phillips) After being beaten and left for dead, Batman pieces together Two-Face's mad plan to poison the inhabitants of Gotham City and liberate their Mr Hyde personalities once and for all! $2.99

Birds of Prey 84 (Gail Simone & Joe Bennett + Jack Jadson) The mission to Singapore blows up as a Bird's health breaks down! Back home, the Huntress becomes the hunted as she and her new allies find themselves in the crosshairs! $2.50

new **Cartoon Network Block Party** Vol 1 *(Get Down;* various) New manga-sized collection reprinting stories from Cartoon Cartoons and Dexter's Laboratory. Featuring the adventures of Dexter, the Kids Next Door, Johnny Bravo and more! 112pg $6.99

Day of Vengeance 4 (of 6; Bill Willingham & Justiniano + Walden Wong) If the combined power of Shazam and the Shadowpact isn't enough to take down the Spectre, what will be? Does Detective Chimp have the answer? $2.50

Ex Machina 13 *(Fact vs Fiction* 2, Brian K. Vaughan & Tony Harris + Tom Feister) Mayor Hundred is one of 12 angry New Yorkers deliberating a scandalous case, but one of his fellow jurors is withholding a dark secret. Mature readers. ... $2.99

The Flash: The Secret of Barry Allen (Geoff Johns & Howard Porter + Livesay; tpb) Collecting The Flash #207-211 and #213-217. The Flash teams up with Nightwing to face Gorilla Grodd! And a dark decision from Barry Allen's past is revealed, leading Wally to make some difficult choices of his own. 240pg $19.99

new **JSA Classified** 1 (Geoff Johns & Amanda Conner + Jimmy Palmiotti) What about Power Girl's origins? Is she a wizard's lost granddaughter? A refugee from the future? An orphan of Krypton? Now learn the unexpected answers in an adventure that acts as a prelude to this fall's massive crossover event that will affect the JSA for years to come! Variant cover. $2.50

Land of the Blindfolded Vol 4 (Tsukuba Sakura, *CMX)* An order from the student council threatens to destroy Arou's school garden! To make matters worse, Kanade has glimpsed a future in which the beautiful student council president falls in love with him! 192pg b&w $9.99

Lucifer 64 (Mike Carey & Peter Gross + Ryan Kelly) Lucifer, Elaine and Jill Presto's new offspring Noemah have been transported to Hell. But Lucifer must contend with Christopher Rudd, the messiah of the damned, and all the ramifications the war in Heaven has unleashed. Mature. ... $2.50

Manhunter 12 (Marc Andreyko & Javier Pina + Fernando Blanco) With the help of a guest who cuts to the chase, Manhunter learns far more about the legacy of her name than it's safe to know. $2.50

Plastic Man 17 (Kyle Baker) Edwina's superpowered new boyfriend proves to be both a threat and a menace. Sounds like a keeper! ... $2.99

Powerpuff Girls 64 (various) Princess gets pernickety when Bubbles wows Townsville with her gardening. It looks like there won't be peas in our time as Princess experiments with new ways to cause trouble! $2.25

Promethea Book Five (Alan Moore & J.H. Williams III; hb; *America's Best Comics)* Collecting issues 26-32. This is the story of the last days before the Apocalypse 200pg $24.99

Robin 140 (Bill Willingham & Scott McDaniel + Andy Owens) Tim Drake's shadowy benefactor, The Veteran, invites Tim to join his government-sponsored Black Ops team. Will Robin leave Batman's side to join a very different – and very legal – crew? $2.25

Teen Titans 26 (Geoff Johns & Tony Daniel + Marlo Alquiza) Feeling empty after recent events, Superboy goes on a soul-searching journey into his past and possible futures with an unlikely guide: Raven. $2.50

final issue **Trigger** 8 (Jason Hall & John Watkiss) Things are back to normal for Carter Lennox – but when you're a deadly assassin, what's normal? And Deirdre Meyers receives another anonymous tip from her Ethicorp informant that could break the Trigger story wide-open. Mature readers. $2.99

Marvel

Cable/Deadpool 17 *(Enema of the State;* Fabian Nicieza & Patrick Zircher) Deadpool, Cannonball and Siryn desperately search for the missing Cable. After scouring several alternate worlds and various alternate Cables, where they find the one true Cable will come as a very big shock. $2.99

Daredevil 75 *(Decalogue* 5 of 5, Brian Michael Bendis & Alex Maleev; *Marvel Knights)* The haunting secret of Matt Murdock's year as Kingpin is revealed in this hardboiled Daredevil story. 48pg $3.99

new **Defenders** 1 (of 5; Keith Giffen & J.M. DeMatteis + Kevin Maguire) Can Doctor Strange reunite the Defenders and save reality as we know it? $2.99

one-shot **Doctor Spectrum: Full Spectrum** (Samm Barnes & Travel Foreman; tpb) Samm Barnes and Travel Foreman bring to light the secret of Corporal Joe Ledger's dark past, and the plans the crystal has for him! Collects Doctor Spectrum #1-6. Mature readers. 144pg $16.99

Exiles 67 *(Destroy All Monsters* 2 of 3; Tony Bedard & James Calafiore) Old teammates are buried, and the search for a way to heal another brings the Exiles face to gruesome face with some of the fiercest monsters in Marvel Universe history! $2.99

one-shot **Fantastic Four: Unstable Molecules** (James Sturm & Guy Davis; tpb) *See Close-Up, below.*

House of M 4 (of 8; Brian Michael Bendis & Olivier Coipel) The fate of the entire world rests on the shoulders of one young girl, the newest of new mutants, Layla Miller. She is about to become the most important person in the Marvel Universe and this is her first appearance. $2.99

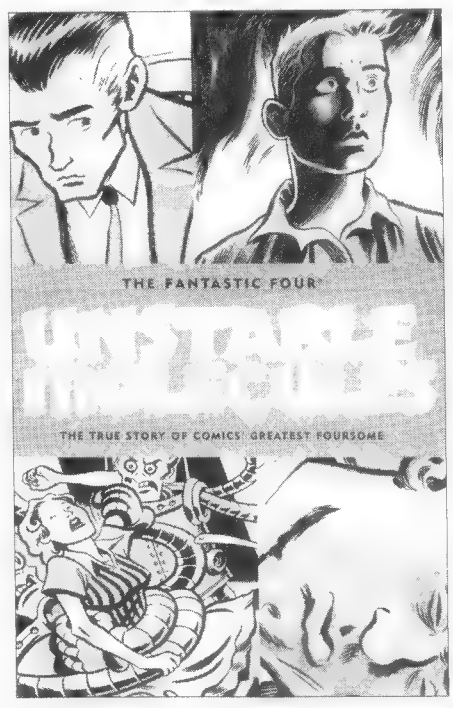
Incredible Hulk 84 *(The Last Refuge* 2 of 4; Peter David & Jorge Lucas) When the tribe's safety is threatened by a battle between a sect of AIM and the ruling totalitarian mutant government, the Hulk is forced to intervene in a big way. .. $2.99

Iron Man 4 *(Extremis* 4 of 6; Warren Ellis & Adi Granov) In order to cope with the product of the Extremis enhancile, will Tony Stark be forced to use it on himself as well? $2.99

Marvel Adventures Fantastic Four 2 (Akira Yoshida & Carlo Pagulayan) When a rampaging alien from another dimension runs amok in New York City, there's only one thing to do – call in the Fantastic Four! But what happens if they're the ones responsible? ... $2.50

Marvel Knights Spider-Man 16 *(Wild Blue Yonder* 4 of 6; Reginald Hudlin & Billy Tan) The neighbourhood's got a new protector. He's bigger, strong and faster than Spidey and, even worse...he's hogging the front page of the Daily Bugle! .. $2.99

one-shot **Marvel Milestones: Dr Strange, Silver Surfer, Sub-Mariner & Hulk** (various) Dr Strange



close-up

Fantastic Four: Unstable Molecules

Marvel

Writer: James Sturm

Artist: Guy Davis

Few people realise that the Fantastic Four – a family of adventurers gifted with amazing powers – was actually based on the lives of real people; as is often the case, real life was as astonishing as fiction. Unstable Molecules is a biography that revisits the FF's beginnings with a historian's eye. Collects the four-issue limited series. Mature readers. 128pg $13.99

ON SALE JULY 20

faces death in the unreal dream world of Nightmare in a story from Marvel Premiere 3! Plus, lots of other vintage fun. 48pg $3.99

one-shot **Marvel Visionaries: John Romita Sr** (various) Collects Strange Tales #4; Menace #11; Young Men #24, #26; Tales To Astonish #77, and a truckload more. 336pg $29.99

New X-Men: Hellions 3 (of 4; Nunzio Defilippis + Christina Weir & Clayton Henry) The Hellions are called in to recover a secret object for the mysterious Kingmaker, but what happens when they discover the nefarious plot the Kingmaker has for it? $2.99

The Pulse Vol 2 *(Secret War;* Brian Michael Bendis & Brent Anderson) Jessica Jones and Luke Cage's lives have been destroyed by the events of the Secret War, so what is Jessica going to do about it? Collects The Pulse #6-9. 128pg . $11.99

Runaways 6 *(True Believers* 6 of 6; Brian K. Vaughan & Adrian Alphona) The Runaways confront Victor Mancha's father, the major Marvel villain who just might persuade his son to join the dark side. $2.99

one-shot **Secrets of the House of M** (Mike Raicht) Revealing startling new details of the moment that changed everything, this volume is a useful companion to the limited-series mega-event. 48pg $3.99

Spider-Man: House of M 2 (of 5; Mark Waid & Tom Peyer + Salvador Larroca) A disgruntled employee named J. Jonah Jameson has just been handed a loaded gun – one that could destroy everything Peter holds dear. $2.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 80 *(Warriors* 2 of 6; Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley) The Kingpin is in retreat – and that power vacuum won't last long. It's about to be filled by a figure of unabashed dread in the underworld: Hammerhead! $2.50

Wolverine 30 *(Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* 5 of 6; Mark Millar & John Romita Jr; *Marvel Knights)* Wolverine continues to dole out the punishment, and the bad boys keep lining up to get it. With his to-do list of villains to crush shrinking by the minute, Wolverine sets his sights on the brass ring: the new Supreme Hydra himself. Mature readers. $2.50

one-shot **X-Force: Shatterstar** (Rob Liefeld & Brandon Thomas + Marat Mychaels; tpb) Shatterstar finds himself fighting for his life on the island of Madripoor. How does he come into possession of the Five Fingers of Annihilation, and who else sought to control its terrible power? Collects X-Force: Shatterstar #1-3, plus Shatterstar's classic first appearance in New Mutants #99-100. 144pg $15.99

X-Men: Kitty Pryde – Shadow & Flame 2 (of 6; Akira Yoshida & Paul Smith) The mystery behind Kitty's trip to Japan deepens when she is attacked by a whole mess of ninjas! $2.99

Young Avengers 6 *(Sidekicks* 6 of 6; Allan Heinberg & Jim Cheung) The Young Avengers lose one of their founding members, a new member arrives on the scene, and the entire team undergoes a radical transformation. $2.99

ON SALE FROM
JULY 27

Dark Horse

Star Wars: Republic 79 *(Into the Unknown* 2 of 2; Welles Hartley & Dough Wheatley + Christopher Chuckry) The galaxy has changed for the Jedi, their Order has been dealt a crippling blow. Now the dark times have begun, and individual Jedi are left to decide whether they will stay true to the duty they took on during the Clone Wars, cast themselves to the will of the Force, or abandon their beliefs altogether. $2.99

Super Manga Blast! 54 (various) Sunao joins the fray in a *Seraphic Feather* space showdown! Will the shy psychic's mental abilities and shaky shooting skills be enough to help rescue Kei? 128pg b&w $5.99

close-up

Avengers West Coast: Vision Quest

Marvel

Writer/Artist: John Byrne

The readjustment of the Vision! Ancient secrets of humanity revealed! The Scarlet Witch's first step into the descent of madness that disassembled the Avengers! Introducing the Great Lakes Avengers and featuring the triumphant return of one of Marvel's hottest Golden Age greats! Collects Avengers West Coast #42-50. 216pg $24.99

ON SALE JULY 27

DC Comics

Albion 2 (of 6; Alan Moore + Leah Moore & various) While Penny and Danny do their best to repair and refurbish Robot Archie to his past glory, they share with each other stories of a bygone heroic era. $2.99

Astro City: The Dark Age 2 (of 16; Kurt Busiek & Brent Anderson) The Silver Agent is accused of murder and treason at the Paris Peace Talks – and back home, criminals are coming under fire from the Blue Knight! $2.99

Batman: Dark Detective 6 (of 6; Steve Englehart & Marshall Rogers + Terry Austin) Batman has traced the Joker to a decaying mansion that serves as the shelter for a special hostage: Silver St Cloud! Unfortunately for the Dark Knight, the mansion is also a funhouse loaded with death traps! $2.99

Cartoon Network Block Party 11 (various) Where has Billy's cat gone? When Mandy's dog fails to find the wayward kitten, Grim summons up his dog: Cerberus! $2.25

Catwoman 45 (Will Pfeifer & Pete Woods) Catwoman has unleashed something deadly into the environment – something so horrible that S.T.A.R. Labs was keeping it under heavy guard. But Catwoman was expecting anthrax, not one of her deadliest foes! $2.50

City of Tomorrow 4 (of 6; Howard Chaykin) As the secrets of Columbia begin to surface, prodigal son Tucker Foyle continues his quest to free the island state from robotic tyranny while discovering not all robots are bad! $2.99

Detective Comics 808 *(City of Crime* 8 of 12; David Lapham + Andersen Gabrych & Ramon Bachs + Nathan Massengill) Paranoia and distrust. Certain death. That's what Batman & Robin face in a Gotham that bears little resemblance to the one they protect! 40pg $2.99

Doom Patrol 14 (John Byrne & Byrne + Terry Austin) Robotman's attempts to alter his past have backfired, sending him through alternate realities where he encounters various Doom Patrols, a younger version of the JLA, and the evil Monsieur. $2.50

The Flash 224 *(Rogue War* 5 of 6; Geoff Johns & Howard Porter + Livesay) The Flash is torn through time as the War takes an unexpected twist, and Wally relives his life through Zoom's twisted eyes. . $2.25

Gotham Central 32 (Greg Rucka + Ed Brubaker & Kano + Stefano Gaudiano) A body turns up in Gotham belonging to...Robin? That means one thing: Batman's going to get involved! $2.50

Green Lantern 3 *(No Fear* 3 of 3; Geoff Johns & Carlos Pacheco + Jesus Merino) There's a new Manhunter in town, claiming sector 2814 is under his jurisdiction. But when Green Lantern discovers the true nature of the android's mission, it's up to Hal Jordan to shut it down! $2.99

Hellblazer 210 *(Down in the Ground Where the Dead Men Go* 4 of 6; Mike Carey & Leonardo Manco) John's infernal quest nears its end point, and Nergal finally spells out what's at stake. Mature readers. $2.75

The Human Race 5 (of 7; Ben Raab & Justiniano + Walden Wong) Ulysses has an old girlfriend, and Nymph doesn't like her one bit – with good reason! . $2.99

JLA Classified 10 *(New Maps of Hell* 1 of 6· Warren Ellis & Butch Guice) In Metropolis, Lois Lane and Clark Kent investigate a rash of suicides at LexCorp, while Batman tracks an assassin with a deadly weapon in Gotham City. $2.99

one-shot **Kinetic** (Kelley Puckett & Warren Pleece; tpb) Collecting the complete 8-issue series. Sickly high-school student Tom Morrell's only escape is the exploits of comicbook hero Kinetic. But Tom's got powers of his own that will change his life – assuming they manifest before Tom decides his life isn't worth living! 192pg $9.99

Legion of Super-Heroes 8 (Mark Waid & Barry Kitson + Art Thibert) The war that will transform the galaxy begins inside Legion headquarters! When one Legionnaire quits the team, it strips away the last bit of civility between Cosmic Boy and Brainiac 5, violently splitting the team in two! 40pg $2.99

Lex Luthor: Man of Steel 5 (of 5; Brian Azzarello & Lee Bermejo) With all the pieces in place, Luthor sets his plan in motion to rid the Earth of the alien menace known as Superman. But what role does a loser like the Toyman play in the grand scheme of things? $2.99

The Losers 26 *(Unamerica* 1 of 3; Andy Diggle & Colin Wilson) Max's mysterious Project is revealed as a massive seismic event rocks the Persian Gulf. But his plans also hinge on another key element: an arsenal of nuclear warheads hidden in a ghost town near Chernobyl. Mature readers .. $2.99

Neil Gaiman's Neverwhere 2 (of 9; Mike Carey & Glenn Fabry) Richard Mayhew hates heights, but he finds himself trailing behind the mad Marquis De Carabras on his errand anyway. And just when he thinks he's finally finished with this whole affair, he finds that he's become a phantom in his own life. Mature readers $2.99

one-shot **Nightwing: Year One** (Chuck Dixon + Scott Beatty & Scott McDaniel + Andy Owens, tpb) Collecting Nightwing #101-106! Learn the history of Dick Grayson and his life after Batman fired him, as he gains advice from Superman, aids Deadman, and makes the decisions that lead him to become a new crimefighter! 144pg $14.99

The Omac Project 4 (of 6; Greg Rucka & Jesus Saiz) The events of *Sacrifice* force an endgame in The Omac Project. Checkmate turns against itself as titans clash in the heavens – and Brother Eye breaks free! $2.50

Otherworld 5 (of 12; Phil Jimenez & Jimenez + Andy Lanning) There's trouble brewing in the mystic lands of the Otherworld, as our heroes face a powerful – and surprising – new threat. Can they convince the mythical creatures to join them in the fight? Mature. $2.99

Outsiders 26 *(Tick Tock* 1 of 2; Peter Tomasi & Will Conrad + Sean Parsons) Old and new members team up as Arsenal helps one of the original Outsiders atone for a mistake made long ago. $2.50

Seven Soldiers: Zatanna 3 (of 4; Grant Morrison & Ryan Sook + Mick Gray) Zatanna and Misty travel with Ali Ka-Zoom to join forces with the Undying Don Vincenzo and face three Days of the Dead. $2.99

Sgt Rock Archives Vol 3 (Robert Kanigher & various; tpb) Collects Our Army at War #111-125, featuring the World War II adventures of Sgt. Rock and his colourful band of fighting soldiers originally published in the early 1960s. 228pg $49.99

new **Silent Dragon** 1 (of 6; Andy Diggle & Leinil Yu & Gerry Alanguilan) Tokyo, 2063. Renjiro is chief advisor to Japan's most notorious gangster: the Yakuza warlord Hideaki. Under his guidance, the Black Dragon Clan has seized total control of Honshu's underworld, ruthlessly crushing any and all opposition. But Hideaki dreams of even greater glories – namely, the overthrow of the government itself! $2.99

Superman/Batman 21 *(With a Vengeance* 2 of 6; Jeph Loeb & Ed McGuinness + Dexter Vine) Are Superman and Batman guilty of murder? The Maximums certainly think so – and where they come from, it's an eye for an eye! $2.99

Teen Titans Go! 21 (J. Torres & Todd Nauck + Lary Stucker) Professor Chang blasts Beast Boy with his new G.A.R.T.H. Gun and transforms him into... Garthzilla! $2.25

Teen Titans Go! Vol 3 *(Bring It On!;* J. Torres & Todd Nauck & Lary Stucker) A third volume collecting the amazing adventures of Robin, Beast Boy, Raven, Cyborg and Starfire, from Teen Titans Go! #11-15. 104pg $6.99

Tenryu: The Dragon Cycle Vol 2 (Matoh Sanami; *CMX)* Ryukei and Hiryu are members of the Black Dragon Gang. To their astonishment, this is not just a name: they are actually Dragons, possessed of unique magical powers. 200pg b&w $9.99

The Twilight Experiment 6 (of 6; Jimmy Palmiotti & Justin Gray + Juan Santacruz) The new hero Serenity must succeed where her predecessor failed, even as Twilight battles the Righteous, the man who killed his mother. If these two young heroes fail, two worlds die! $2.99

Year One: Batman/Ra's Al Ghul 2 (of 2; Devin Grayson & Paul Gulacy + Jimmy Palmiotti) Prestige format. Ra's al Ghul may be dead, but he has set something in motion that from people from dying, and what started in Gotham City is spreading across the globe. 48pg . $5.99

Wonder Woman 219 *(Sacrifice* 4 of 4; Greg Rucka & Rags Morales + Michael Bair) With Wonder Woman dead set against Superman's plan to even the score, the two heroes collide in an event that will send shock waves throughout the DCU. $2.25

Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man 522 (J. Michael Straczynski & Mike Deodato) The hordes of Hydra make a final push to take over the US, and it's up to everyone's favourite red, white and blue web-slinger to make sure that Hail Hydra isn't the new national anthem! $2.50

Araña 7 *(Unexpected Pasts* 1 of 6; Fiona Avery & Francis Portela) Exactly what happened to Araña's mother before she disappeared all those years ago? Startling new information on her family's past spurs Anya to launch her own personal investigation. $2.99

one-shot **Avengers West Coast: Vision Quest** (John Byrne; tpb) The Scarlet Witch's first step into the descent of madness that disassembled the Avengers! Introducing the Great Lakes Avengers and featuring the triumphant return of one of Marvel's hottest golden age greats! Collects Avengers West Coast #42-50. 216pg $24.99

Black Panther 6 *(Who is the Black Panther?* 6 of 6; Reginald Hudlin & John

Romita Jr; *Marvel Knights)* It's a rumble in the jungle as the Wakandan royal family squares off against the Radioactive Man, and the Black Panther goes toe-to-toe with his arch-nemesis Klaw in a battle royale! $2.99

new **Daredevil vs Punisher** 1 *(Means and Ends* 1 of 6; Dave Lapham; *Marvel Knights)* Daredevil and the Punisher vie for the soul of Hell's Kitchen as half of the East Coast's underworld – in chaos since Wilson Fisk, the Kingpin of crime, was deposed – scrambles for its shot at the big chair. $2.99

Exiles Vol 10 *(Age of Apocalypse;* Tony Bedard & Jim Calafiore + Mizuki Sakakibara; tpb) The Exiles return to the AoA with the unlikeliest new teammate: Apocalype's homicidal son, Holocaust! Collects Exiles #59-61, plus the Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe: Age of Apocalypse 2005. 128pg $12.99

Fantastic Four 529 *(Appointment Overdue;* J. Michael Straczynski & Mike McKone) Reed's got a rendezvous to keep at the edge of space – but in order to reach it, he's going to have to work his way through a battalion of America's best-trained fighting men! $2.99

one-shot **Giant-Sized Spider-Woman** 1 (Brian Michael Bendis & Rick Mays) Classic tales, plus a brand new eight page story by New Avengers scribe Brian Michael Bendis and artist Rick Mays. 96pg $4.99

Hercules 5 (of 5; Frank Tieri & Mark Texeira; *Marvel Knights)* Hercules has picked up the gauntlet thrown down by King Eurytheses and then some – he's completed eight of the Twelve Labours set before him. Mature readers. $2.99

one-shot **House of M: Excalibur Prelude** (Chris Claremont & Aaron Lopresti; tpb) Callisto answers a cry for help from Warren Worthington, a.k.a. Archangel! But Callisto and Warren have some pretty unpleasant history between them; can they overcome their differences long enough to survive? Collects Excalibur #11-14. 96pg $11.99

new **Hulk: Destruction** 1 (of 4; Peter David & Jim Muniz) The new, definitive origin of the Abomination is revealed, serving as a backdrop against Emil Blonsky's unwilling return to Mother Russia. Mature readers. $2.99

Livewires 6 (of 6; Adam Warren & Rick Mays) Death and destruction abound as hordes of enemy mecha close in on a weaponless, defenceless Stem Cell who, in turn, is frantically trying to hack herself, to reformat and reboot her A.I. mind and robotic body, as time runs out. $2.99

Machine Teen 3 (of 5; Marc Sumerak & Mike Hawthorne) The perfect life becomes a perfect lie as Adam learns the frightening truth about his origin! . $2.99

New Avengers 9 *(The Sentry* 3 of 3; Brian Michael Bendis & Steve McNiven) What has kept the Sentry a secret from the world, and how will the world react to his re-emerging? Variant cover. $2.50

New X-Men 16 *(House Divided* 1 of 4; Nunzio Defilippis & Christina Weir + Aaron Lopresti) When orders come down that a leader of the human resistance in Japan must be assassinated, S.H.I.E.L.D.'s highly trained Hellions squad is called in to do it. $2.99

Nightcrawler 8 *(The Winding Way;* Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Darick Robertson) Kurt's journey along the winding way begins in earnest as he, buddy Logan, and hottie nurse Christine Palmer travel to the eerie forests of Bavaria, where our favourite blue elf was raised by the gypsy enchantress, Margali Szardos. $2.99

one-shot **Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe: Avengers 2005** (various) In-depth bios on the New Avengers, the Young Avengers, the Great Lakes Avengers and more of your favourite old-school Avengers! 48pg $3.99

Spellbinders 5 (of 6; Mike Carey & Mike Perkins) An ancient enemy has returned to crush the witches of Salem, and the Pillar of Smoke has spoken for the last time. $2.99

The Pulse 10 (Brian Michael Bendis & Michael Lark) Brian Bendis peels a layer off the mystery of the Marvel Universe that no Avengers fan dare miss! $2.99

one-shot **The Pulse: House of M Special Edition** (Brian Michael Bendis & various) The actual newspaper from the House of M – your best source for late-breaking-survival! 12pg .. $.50

Ultimate Iron Man 3 (of 5; Orson Scott Card & Andy Kubert) Orson Scott Card (Ender's Game) and Andy Kubert (1602) tell the tale of Tony Stark. Mature. $2.99

Ultimate Spider-Man Vol 13 *(Hobgoblin;* Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley; tpb) It's the terrifying debut of the Ultimate Hobgoblin as Harry Osborn returns to Midtown High harboring a dark secret that will affect the lives of all those around him – especially his best friend, Peter Parker. Collects Ultimate Spider-Man #72-78. 168pg $15.99

X-Men 173 *(Bizarre Love Triangle* 3 of 3; Peter Milligan & Salvador Larroca) Gambit and Rogue's tumultuous relationship reaches its ultimate breaking point! Will Gambit give in to his desires and find love in the arms of another woman? ... $2.50

RELEASED AND ON SALE IN

JULY

Abstract Studios

Strangers in Paradise 75 (Terry Moore) Katchoo and Francine are shocked to run into each other at the bank, just in time for a hold-up. 24pg b&w $2.95

Amaze Ink/ Slave Labor

one-shot **Terebella Smoot and the Unsung Monsters** (Jon Bean Hastings) Separated from her family on the way to the Monster of the Year celebration, young monster, Terrabella Smoot finds herself on an adventure of goofy proportions. 48pg $10.95

Autumn 4 (Tommy Kovac) Something gruesome has happened to Ferula, a quiet, simple girl. The villagers are darkly suspicious of Autumn, who had a public altercation with Ferula and her friends. 24pg $2.95

Cocopiazo 4 (Daniel Warner) John meets the Someday Caf Writing Circle where the horrors of the Wannabee Novelists are revealed. Dark framed glasses, self-absorption, and impotent rage abound! 24pg $2.95

new **Dead Eyes Open** 1 (Matthew Shepherd & Roy Boney Jr) Family therapist Dr John Requin is forced to deal not only with his own death, but a government conspiracy to destroy him. 24pg $2.95

Lenore 12 (Roman Dirge) The grand battle concludes, when Ragamuffin lets loose his claws and fights the demon hordes to ensure Lenore isn't returned to the deep, Frito-stinky pits of Heck. 24pg $2.95

Next Exit 5 (Christy Lijewski) What relation does Cara have to Markesh? Who was the strange man Mary-Alice was talking about? And just what exactly is Mary-Alice anyway? 24pg $2.95

Nightmares & Fairy Tales Vol 2 *(Beautiful Beasts;* Serena Valentino & FSc) Haunting stories from fairy tales to a 1940s murder-mystery thriller fill this collection of the fan-favourite horror series about ghostly love, the souls of dead children and beasts who are beauties and beauties who are beasts. 184pg $14.95

one-shot **Silent Dance** (Matteo Casali & Grazia Lobaccaro + Alessandro DeAngelis) *See Close-Up, below.*

Antarctic Press

Gold Digger 66 (Fred Perry) Monty leads Ryan and Ayane to the *Library of Arts,* a hidden archive of the deadliest and most ancient fighting techniques. $2.99

How to Draw Manga: Next Generation 7 (various) Features exclusively created art and step-by-step guides to creating manga-flavoured designs. b&w $4.95

IHunt Monsters Vol 2 #7 (Rod Espinosa & Wes Hartman + Craig Babiar) Will and co go toe-to-toe with a mystic warrior, who guards pieces of the coveted enchanted silver cross of Van Helsing. b&w $2.99

one-shot **Legends from Darkwood: Summer Fun Special** (various) Join Mr Spike, retired rock star, amateur necromancer and cunning opportunist, as he raises the dead and raids the coffers of the wealthy while the town burns. b&w $2.99

one-shot **Luftwaffe 1946: Sourcebook** Vol 1 (Ted Nomura) Everything you ever wanted to know about Nomura's altered war chronicles. 48pg b&w $5.95

one-shot **Mangamerica: 20 Years of Antarctic Press** (various) Contains a chronological history, and provides a perspective on the evolution of the company and its creators. 128pg $24.95

Ninja High School Pocket Manga Vol 6 (Ben Dunn) Jeremy's latest lovely female pursuer is an android named May who wants to kidnap him across time and space. Collects Ninja High School #23-27. 144pg b&w $9.99

Ninja High School 130 (Chris Reid & Ben Dunn) It's the first day of a new school year for Ricky Feeple, but this year the school is being run by a top secret government agency that plans to have all the students kill one another. b&w $2.99

Oz: The Manga 2 (David Hutchison) As Dorothy begins her journey to find the great and powerful Oz, she encounters dangers she could never imagine, but also befriends some unlikely allies in her time of need. b&w $2.99

Weapons File 2 (various) Loads of pictures of guns and other weapons you can copy into your own best-selling comicbook. b&w $4.95

AP Comics

Dark Mists 3 (of 4; Annika Eade & Lee Garbett) Unknowingly, Kimi has accidentally killed her own instructor. This incident is going to be the fulcrum of a blackmail plot against her. Mature. $3.50

Darkham Vale: Uprising #3 (Harry Gallan & Paul Gutierrez) Karlack and his minions are preparing for a war that will bring the town to its knees. . $3.50

The Gloom #3 (Tony Lee & Daniel Boutlwood) With the Gloom dead, the dastardly Vermilion and his Nazi cohorts turn their evil shenigans towards the world leaders summit. But is the Gloom really gone?. $3.50

Lexian Chronicles: Full Circle 3 (Harry Gallan & Chris Bunting + Inaki Miranda) Reena immerses herself in ancient writings, determined to decipher their meaning, which could shed light on the past and her ancestors. $3.50

Mr T #3 (Chris Bunting & Neil Edwards) Mr T is back and cleaning up the streets. He awakens to find himself prisoner to the viscous Padilla crime family. $3.50

Scatterbrain 2 (Brendan Deenan & Tim Seelig) After the shocking events, Jack Anderfold must wrap his head around the fact that someone else got to Scatterbrain before him. $3.50

Archie Comics

Archie 559 (various & Stan Goldberg) When a red-headed beauty moves next door, Archie's self-composure moves out the door-along with the rest of him! $2.25

Archie & Friends 93 (Scott Cunningham & Stan Goldberg) The Archies are back – and they're singing the blues! What can be worse than driving back from a bad gig in the sweltering heat with a broken air conditioner? Running out of radiator fluid and having to spend the night at an allegedly haunted lake, that's what! $2.25

Betty 149 (various & Stan Goldberg) Never flatter a girl so you can borrow her tandem bike – to take her rival, Veronica on a date! $2.25

Betty & Veronica 211 (Barbara Slate + Kathleen Webb & Jeff Schultz) Betty chastises Veronica for deciding to take snappy dresser Reggie to the country club dance instead of Archie, and it's one ticking off she may soon regret! $2.25

Jughead 167 (Craig Boldman & Rex Lindsey) Somebody is swiping frosting samples from cakes all over Riverdale, and the swipes are in the shape of the letter 'J'. Who could it possibly be? $2.25

Sonic the Hedgehog 152 (Ken Penders & various) After all the trouble Sonic has had, things just got worse! All the girls on the Freedom Fighters team are furious at the blue blunder head... just when their teamwork is needed most! $2.25

Veronica 163 (Dan Parent) When Ginger's latest fashions are accidentally shredded in transit, all is not lost: with help from Veronica, she builds a fashion show around her favourite TV show. $2.25

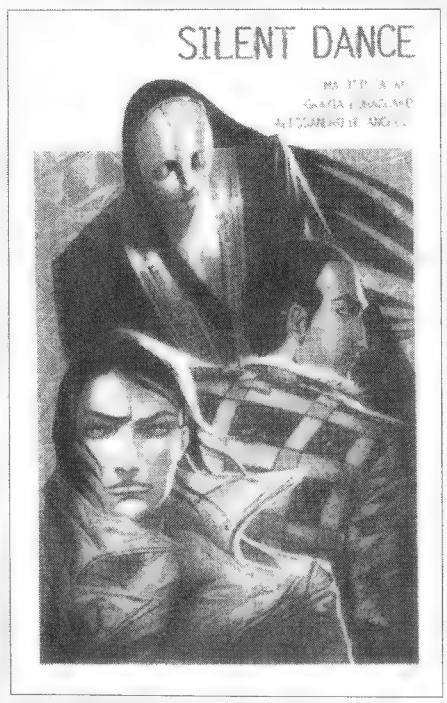
Avatar Press

one-shot **Lady Death: Death Goddess** (Brian Pulido & Matt Martin, Richard Ortiz) Spirited away from her allies, Lady Death is lost in an exotic, ancient realm controlled by a beautiful, seemingly benevolent Goddess named Leviathia. b&w 16pg $2.50

Brian Pulido's Lady Death: Abandon All Hope 2 (of 4; Brian Pulido & Ron Adrian) Lady Death and her allies Wargoth and Satasha are left for dead by the deranged warlock, Sagos. Exhausted and battered, they are ripe for picking by the vicious Nameless Wolves! $3.99

Brian Pulido's Medieval Lady Death 6 .... (Brian Pulido & Wellington Alves) Lady Death is lured back to Aglarond by Skold of the assassin's guild: a clan of warriors immune to magic. Separated from her allies, surrounded by her enemies, she can't escape! .. $3.99

new **Medieval Lady Death / Belladonna** 1 (Brian Pulido & Daniel) Medieval Lady Death and



close-up

Silent Dance

Slave Labor Graphics

Writer: Matteo Casali

Artists: Grazia Lobaccaro + Alessandro DeAngelis

A European drama set in modern-day London. As supernatural nightmares and human horrors unravel in their lives, two eternal enemies will be caught in a deadly dance. A striking and exciting story that focuses on the human aspects and frailties of its supernatural characters. 208pg $14.95

ON SALE JULY

Wolf, on the run from the evil Bishop Vitirio, try to hide out in Wexford Ireland, but have the misfortune of arriving at the same time as Rurik discovers and ancient talisman he can use to control gargoyles, unleashing a wave of evil that washes over the land. $3.99

Bongo Comics

Simpsons Classics 5 (Matt Groening) Bart and Milhouse accidentally go on a fantastic voyage through Mr Burns's enfeebled body, forcing Homer to follow them. 64pg $3.99

Simpsons Comics 108 (Dixon & Constanza) In an attempt to fend off the FBI, Mr Burns frames Homer with his felonious offences. $2.99

Claypool

Elvira 147 (various) Elvira is the magic consultant on the new movie by demon director M. Dark Shyvverman, but she might want to quite when real demons take over. b&w $2.50

Drawn & Quarterly

Drawn & Quarterly Showcase Vol 3 (various) Rising star Sammy Harkham is given a few pages here, for his latest story, *Somersaulting*. Plus a look at the work of Matt Broersma. Mature readers. 96pg $14.95

Ed the Happy Clown 2 (of 9; Chester Brown) This issue kicks off with *The Man Who Couldn't Stop*, and continues right through to Ed's unusual way of breaking out of prison. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

El Capitan

Stray Bullets Vol 3 *(Other People;* David Lapham) The third of four new anniversary editions, collecting seven tales of twisted emotions. 224pg b&w $19.95

Fantagraphics

Bette Noire 2 (of 4; various) Quarterly anthology. Focuses on alternative manga and European 'brut', plus a second helping of Kevin Scalzo's *Sugar Booger*. Mature readers. 88pg $9.95

one-shot **The Freebooters** (Barry Windsor-Smith; hb) Collects the stories from BWS: Storyteller from the early 1990s, including a full-length chapter from the unpublished 10th issue, plus more than 50 pages of new story. 184pg $29.95

new **Grenuord** 1 (of 6; Francesca) Fleeing his previous life as a factory worker, George Henderson arrives in Grenuorda to find it rocked by terrorist attacks and in full police state alert mode. Mature . b&w $4.95

one-shot **Late Bloomer** (C. Tyler) Collecting three dozen stories, including some new and unpublished. $24.95

Love & Rockets Vol 2 #14 (Los Bros Hernandez) Mark Herrera returns to his abusive family for a visit, while Julio's grand-nephew encounters the long-disowned Uncle Juan. b&w $4.50

new **Mineshaft** 1 (various) Features an Amazon Women cover by R. Crumb, who also contributes *Curse of the Fetish Obsession*. Sketchbooks drawings. 56pg b&w $5.00

one-shot **The Pin-Up Art of Ben Wenzel** (ed Alex Chun) *See Close-Up, above.*

close-up

The Pin-Up Art of Ben Wenzel

Fantagraphics Books

Editor: Alex Chun

No other pin-up cartoonist has been as prolific as Ben Wenzel. Virtually every humour or men's magazine has had his work between its sheets. Whether it was the aloof secretary or the smouldering vixen, these stylised noodles always boasted his kinky kind of style. Mature readers. 224pg $18.95

ON SALE JULY

one-shot **Sheep of Fools: A Blab Story book** (Sue Coe & Judith Brody) Describing the cruel and desperate economic phenomenon of live transport – i.e. sheep being transported across oceans to be slaughtered. $14.95

new **Tales Designed to Thrizzle** 1 (Michael Kupperman) This wins our 'good title' award this month. It's the first issue of a new ongoing series from Kupperman, including *Uncle Billy's Drunken, Bitter Guide to the Animal Kingdom* and new Pablo Picasso adventures. Mature readers. $4.50

one-shot **We All Die Alone** (Mark Newgarden; hb) Collects Garbage Pail parent Newgarden's syndicated cartoonery, plus a few long-form stories from various anthologies. 224pg $28.95

Image Comics

Amazing Joy Buzzards 5 (Mark Smith & Dan Hipp) Internationally famous racecar driver Stevo Vargas races towards Monaco – and his doom – as a group of nefarious supernatural-mod-hipsters plan to put the breaks on our hunky hero! b&w $2.95

Arcanum (Brandon Peterson; *Top Cow;* tpb) Armageddon is coming. Which side will you choose? Collecting Arcanum 1-8, plus the Wizard ½ issue. 240pg . $16.99

Armor X #4 (Keith Champagne & Andy Smith) Running for his life, Carson finds himself faced with an impossible choice: Either give up the suit of armour and forfeit his own life or watch as his entire town and all its people are destroyed. 28pg . $2.95

one-shot **Artxilla Tasty Treats 2005** (various) Showcase volume featuring work by comicbook and animation artists from Artxilla Studios. 64pg $6.99

Atheist 3 (Phil Hester & John McCrea) Sharpe and Nguyen are on the run. The possessed, real or not, are organised and wish to snuff out Sharpe's investigation before he can reveal the truth. b&w $3.50

one-shot **(All of...) Bad Ideas: Collected (in One Giganto Book!)** (Wayne Chinsang & Jim Mahfood + Dave Crosland) Collecting the first two books of Bad Ideas into one volume, plus 12 pages of an all-new storyline revealing the true identity of Comic Kid and Hot Chick's arch-nemesis, Pussy Voodoo. 124pg b&w $12.95

Battle Pope 2 (Robert Kirkman & Tony Moore + Val Staples) Watch Battle Pope and his trusty sidekick, Jesus, beat the snot out of a pair of dead people! It hardly seems fair. Reprinting Robert Kirkman's first published work. b&w $2.95

Beyond Avalon 3 (Joe Pruett & Goran Sudzuka) As Megan and Jerome fight off the reptilian guardians of the Tower of the Two Dragons, they discover that they are not the only wanderers on the island of Lamiam who have an interest in the secrets within the Tower. b&w ... $3.50

Blacklight 22 (Jim Valentino+ Scott Wherle & John Toledo + Marc Deering) Lina assumes the mantle of the new Blacklight, but before she can even learn how her new powers work, she gets caught up in a local drug war when the far more experienced, super-powered killer-for-hire Cicada hits town. b&w .. $2.99

new **Body Bags: Father's Day** 1 (Jason Pearson) The action begins when a rival body 'bagger' goes after Mack (AKA Clown Face), the best bagger in the business. Fuel is quickly added to the fire with the sudden arrival of Panda, Mack's estranged daughter. 48pg $5.99

new **Bonerest** 1 (Matteo Cassali & Guiseppe Camuncoli) Bonerest is the surreal story of the mouthless man known as Adam Bone. He has come to New York to settle a mysterious debt, but unwittingly brings about the end of days. Mature. .. $2.95

Case Files: Sam & Twitch 22 *(Fathers and Daughters* 3; Marc Andrekyo & Greg Scott) The mystery of who murdered child starlet Lacey Ann Lyons takes more unexpected twists with the discovery of a ransom note and the disturbing findings of the coroner. Mature readers. b&w $2.50

Chrono Mechanics 2 (Art Thibert + Rich Birdsall & Thibert + Chris Chua) Doug, Zyn, Oot, and Caravaggio have their much needed holidays cut short when they are assigned the job of locating and repairing a faulty Reality Filter Prism that threatens to alter every time line in existence! 48pg b&w $6.95

City of Heroes 3 (Mark Waid & David Nakayama + Sonia Oback; *Top Cow)* Paragon City has been crippled by a mysterious attack. Statesman, the city's greatest hero, is still missing. All the city's remaining heroes, including the Freedom Phalanx, are struggling to deal with their powers that have vanished or gone haywire. $2.99

Common Foe 2 (Keith Giffen & Shannon Denton + Jean-Jacques Dzialowski) Night falls. American and German GIs come face to face with the ravenous reality behind the vampire myth and must unite against a common foe or die. b&w $3.50

Darkness 22 (David Wohl & Martin Montiel + Sonia Oback; *Top Cow)* Just when he thought it was safe to come back to New York City, mobster Jackie Estacado finds himself face to face with...the Angelus! $2.99

Darkness: Flesh And Blood Vol 3.5 (Scott Lobdell + Christina Z & various; *Top Cow;* tpb) Collecting The Darkness #26-39 as well as the crossover books Witchblade/Darkness and Darkness/Witchblade, this volume fills in the blanks on Jackie' past, and his place in the world. 464pg $24.99

Dawn: Three Tiers 6 (of 6; Joseph Michael Linsner) Has Darrian successfully elevated his line of sight up beyond three tiers? Will Dawn finally reveal herself and make her intentions clear? Will our star-crossed lovers reunite at long last? $2.95

one-shot **Date with the Devil: Cholly & Flytrap Special** (Bob Burden + Arthur Suydam & Suydam) Gorgeous girls, twisted plots abound as the intrepid Cholly and Flytrap come face to face with forces of evil and battle the devil himself. ... $3.50

The Expatriate 5 (B. Clay Moore & Jason Latour) Jack Dexter has to go back on the run, but to do so he's got to escape from the clutches of his own government. That means he's got to overcome a sexy Russian spy, the horrible things that have been done to his body, and deadly things that glow bright green. $2.95

Flak Riot 2 (Michael O'hare + Robert Napton & O'Hare + Michael Garcia) Zoe Nixxon wanted change and she's got it. Trapped in the O.D., she must face an angry T-Rex in order to complete her graduation exercise: buying some tacos! $2.95

new **Freshmen** 1 (of 6; Hugh Sterbakov & Leonard Kirk + Tyson Wengler; *Top Cow)* What if a group of college freshmen suddenly got amazing superpowers? What if the powers were based on exactly what they were thinking at the moment? Variant covers. $2.99

Girls 3 (Joshua Luna & Jonathan Luna) The ultimate battle of the sexes begins. $2.95

Godland 2 (Joe Casey & Tom Scioli) Adam Archer, the world's first star-powered superhero versus the one and only Basil Cronus – with a mysterious alien visitor caught in the middle! $2.95

new **Grounded** 1 (Mark Sable & Paul Azaceta) When Jonathan is sent to a high school for superpowered children, he's forced to abandon his fantasy of developing powers and deal with the reality that he's the only kid without them. $2.95

new **Guncandy** 1 (various) Brian Stelfreeze returns to Image for some action adventure, starring Laci, the original pink-plaid assassin. Explosions, mayhem, and insane fun are guaranteed. Mature readers. $5.99

Hammer of the Gods Vol 2 *(Back from the Dead;* Mark Obie Wheatley + Michael Avon Oeming & Oeming; tpb) Modi, the tortured Viking lad, Skögul the Valkyrie and the pesky Gods of Asgard all return for a collection of epic tales. Includes several all-new stories as well as the popular Hammer Hits China. Collects Hammer Hits China #1-3. 160pg $15.95

one-shot **Hellshock: The Definitive Edition** (Jae Lee) In the confines of a psychiatric hospital, a suicidal young woman meets an enigmatic stranger who believes he is an angelic presence not of this earth gifted with the powers of God. Collects Vol 2 #1-3. 144pg $19.99

Hero Camp 3 (Greg Thompson & Robbi Rodriguez) When the deadly Chupacabra sets its sights on Goat, he seeks help from a most unlikely place – Camp Enokchuk! Now it's up to Eric and his pals to save the life of their most despicable foe. $2.95

one-shot **Hunter-Killer Dossier** (Mark Waid & various; *Top Cow)* All the secrets behind Hunter-Killer's massive, sweeping conspiracy are revealed with illustrations by over a dozen artists. $2.99

Liberty Meadows Vol 3 *(Summer of Love;* Frank Cho; tpb) As the summer approaches, Brandy secretly falls in love with Frank. But around the corner, a catastrophe of global proportions awaits. Collects Liberty Meadows #19-27. 144pg $14.95

Mage Vol 2 *(The Hero Defined;* Matt Wagner) Kevin Matchstick's path brings him into the company of other legendary heroes, reborn in the modern world under the most everyday guises. Collects Mage: The Hero Defined #1-15. ..... $49.95

one-shot **M.I.T.H: Operation Smoking Jaguar** (Jennifer Brandes Hepler + Chris Hepler & Stephen Segovia; *Top Cow)* What if magic was real? And what if the CIA were the only ones who knew about it? In M.I.T.H., the Magical Intelligence Tactical Headquarters controls the real secret behind America's military might. 112pg $9.99

Noble Causes Vol 4 *(Blood & Water;* Jay Faerber & Fran Bueno; tpb) The Noble family is again plagued by scandal when their friend, Krennick, is suspected of murdering a prostitute who was found dressed up like Zephyr Noble. Collects Noble Causes #1-6. 144pg $14.95

NYC Mech: Beta Love 3 (Miles Gunter & Ivan Brandon + Andy Macdonald) Romance is in the air, but this is NYC Mech, so the other shoe is about to drop. There's a dark cloud headed to NYC, and as Quentin gets drunk on love, his old life begins to crumble. 144pg $14.95

Pigtale 4 (Ovi Nedelcu) Boston and Clyde venture off into the face of danger to help one another overcome their fears, rescue loved ones and save the city from Taxx, who's bent on destroying Clyde. b&w $2.95

Rising Stars: Voices of the Dead 4 (of 6; Fiona Avery + Staz Johnson & Wayne Faucher + Steve Firchow; *Top Cow)* Ghost-talker Lionel Zerb struggles with the weight of the psychic world as he tries to determine what the vortex within the House on Stansbury Lane really contains. $2.99

one-shot **Sea of Red** Vol 1 *(No Grave But the Sea;* Rick Remender + Kieron Dwyer & Salgood + Dwyer; tpb) Marco Esperanza has spent the past 400 years tied to the bow of a sunken vessel. His confinement at the bottom of the sea ends when he is discovered by film director Joel Cameron's submarine on a scouting expedition for his next film. Collects Sea of Red 1-4. Mature. 104pg $8.95

Sea of Red 5 (Rick Remender + Kieron Dwyer & Paul Harmon) The year is 521 AD and Lesser Blackthroat, assassin for a secret sect of the Catholic Church, attempts to obtain the blood of a messiah in hopes of washing his cursed spirit. $2.95

Shadowhawk 3 (Jim Valentino + Jim Keplinger & Carlos Rodriguez + Albert Puig) He's been stalking ShadowHawk for days, and now he's ready to strike! He's a better fighter, he's better armed – and Eddie is going to have to pull out all the stops if he ever expects to best a man called Nocturn. $2.99

new **The Silencers** 1 (Fred Van Lente & Steve Ellis) The feared and legendary Cardinal is hell-bent on leading his Silencers to the top of the New York City crime scene, even if he has to blow through every rival supergang to do it. $2.95

Small Gods 10 *(Nightingale* 1; Jason Rand & Juan E. Ferreyra) Cristina Fierro is one of the CIA's best black bag operatives – but how can a killer hope to retain her sanity, when, as an empath, she feels every bit of her victims' pain and terror? b&w $2.95

Spawn 148 *(Random Patterns* 1; Brian Holguin + Todd McFarlane & Angel Medina + Danny Miki) Al Simmons continues his trek across the country, a journey into the dark, hidden corners of America. $2.50

Stardust Kid 2 (J.M. Dematteis & Mike Ploog) The entire neighbourhood has transformed into a savage, primeval land populated by trolls, elves and other fantastical creatures. $3.50

Strange Girl 2 (Rick Remender & Eric Nguyen) After years of living under the protection of Belial and The Corridor, Bethany and Bloato have to get out of Dodge and survive the harsh terrain of the American wastelands. $2.95

one-shot **Tomb Raider/ Witchblade/ Magdalena/Vampirella** (Gail Simone + Kevin McCarthy & Joyce Chin; *Top Cow)* Kevin McCarthy (The Escapist) takes Tomb Raider Lara Croft through *Sphere of Influence,* while Gail Simone (Action Comics) faces Witchblade, Magdalena and Vampirella off against a vampire. $2.99

The Walking Dead 22 (Robert Kirkman & Charlie Adlard) With the dangers of this zombie filled world safely on the other side of the prison walls our band of survivors finally has time to explore their new home. Unfortunately there's still more than enough conflict on the inside of the walls. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

Wildguard: Fool's Gold 1 & 2 (of 2; Todd Nauck) Superstar and WildGuard team leader, Four, takes her team to fashion charity show to lend their star power to a worthy cause: keeping superpowered youth on the straight and narrow. $3.50

Witchblade 88 (Ron Marz + Mike Choi & Sal Regla + Brian Buccellato; *Top Cow)* This issue tests everything Sara Pezzini has ever learned about being a New York City Police detective. When a friend's young daughter is missing, not even the mysterious power of the Witchblade can help Sara find her. $2.99

Moonstone

new **Khan** 1 (Tom DeFalco & Don Hudson) Witness the beginning of Temujin – a barbarian born into poverty in the timeless age of heroic fantasy, swords and sorcery. b&w $2.95

The Phantom 8 (various) High tech Sky Pirates have the Phantom and several of the world's wealthiest men prisoner in their lair. $3.50

one-shot **The Silencers: Black Kiss** (Fred Van Lente & Steve Ellis; tpb) When the Silencers' leader plans to retire, a rival syndicate makes a move against him. Reprints the miniseries. $14.95

Oni Press

new **Banana Sundays** 1 (of 4; Root Nibot & Colleen Coover) Kirby Steinberg is having trouble fitting in to her new school. See, she's the guardian of three talking monkeys. b&w $2.99

one-shot **Capote in Kansas** (Ande Parks & Chris Samnee) Fictionalised tale of Truman Capote's research for a book amid struggles with betrayal and his own troubled past. Mature. 128pg b&w $11.95

one-shot **Courtney Crumrin Tales** 1 (Ted Naifeh) The first in a series of prestige format one shots. This focuses on the dark and dangerous early years of a younger Uncle Aloysius an d the world of witchcraft that shaped him. ... $5.95

Queen & Country Declassified Vol 3 (Johnston & Mitten + Rucka) Battered but not dead, Nick Poole has gone rogue from the SAS, and is heading for a confrontation with Liam Finnegan. Mature readers. b&w $2.99

Sirius

Poison Elves Ventures 3 *(Purple Marauder;* Keith Davidsen & Aaron Bordner) When the demon-worshipping Cult of Lust encroaches on rival territory, a mysterious Mandrathan crime lord strikes back with the Purple Marauder. Mature readers. $3.50

Tokyopop

Battle Royale 13 (various; tpb) The two biggest psychos – Kazuo Kiriyama and Mitsuko Souma – finally meet face-to-face. Having racked up the highest body counts between them, these two are responsible for the majority of deaths on the island. 224pg $9.99

new **Beck: Mongolian Chop Squad** 1 (various; tpb) 14-year old Yukio Tanaka is one heck of a boring guy. He has no hobbies, a weak taste in music, and only a small vestige of a personality. Little does he know that his life will be forever changed when he meets rocker Ryusuke Minami, an unpredictable 16-year old with a cool dog named Beck. 224pg $9.99

Blade of Heaven 3 (various; tpb) As the father and son team of Doksooma and Makumrang square off against Darkling a tragic turn of events unleashes the Kwangama Devil from the Sword of Kwangma. 280pg $9.99

Boys Be... 5 (various; tpb) At the beach, guys are checking out the girls, but will they just end up sunburned? A girl drops by a guy's summerhouse unexpectedly; will he get to see more than tan lines? 192pg $9.99

new **Chrono Code** 1 (various; tpb) Three people cross time and space to find each other, and to try to change destiny. But with a powerful satellite, a secret code and the future police out hunting, one girl with amnesia, who may be the key to everything, must discover the true nature of her past – and her friends. 192pg $9.99

DearS 3 (various; tpb) After Ren battles a DearS Biter attempting to recapture her and Takeya asserts his rights as Ren's owner in order to save her from termination, their lives are further complicated by the arrival of Takeya's little sister Natsuki. 208pg $9.99

Fruits Basket 10 (Natsuki Takaya; tpb) Tohru and the Sohmas are spending time at the Sohma family's summerhouse, but it's not all fun in the sun on this little trip. 208pg $9.99

Getbackers 10 (various; tpb) With Ginji now in full Lightning Lord mode, he begins his rematch with the dangerous Akabane. 200pg $9.99

Gravitation 12 (various; tpb) Bad Luck is out to crash Nittle Grasper's concert with a brand new song! Can Shuichi steal the thunder from Ryuichi, or has Bad Luck's streak finally run out? 208pg $9.99

one-shot **Heat Guy J** (various; tpb) Daisuke Aurora works with the special division of peacekeepers in the city of Jewde, one of the largest cities on the planet. He and his android partner, Heat Guy J, team up to make sure that anything illegal stays off the streets and out of circulation. 224pg $9.99

iD eNTITY 2 (various; tpb) Roto tries to return to the virtual world of Lost Saga, but he discovers that his card has expired and he can't log on. When he comes across an ID card with the name Yureka on it, Roto has found a new way to get into the game. The problem is, you're not supposed to log on with someone else's card. 192pg $9.99

Immortal Rain 6 (various; tpb) When Rain gets separated from Machika, he will need to battle low-grade angles, Ys and a mysterious new player before he can be reunited with her. 184pg . $9.99

In Dream World 2 (various; tpb) Hanee, Drake and Bunny Girl are travelling through Dream World by an airship powered by a masterless elemental, El Forrest. When the ship is attacked by Nightmares, Hanee, Drake, Bunny Girl and the stowaway Mei join forces to defeat the enemy. 192pg $9.99

Kare Kano 16 (various; tpb) Soichiro reveals his painful past to Yukino, and the truth behind his unfaltering drive to be perfect. 192pg $9.99

King of Hell 10 (various; tpb) After pretending to be killed by the Shegwes, Majeh and the others have discovered that the So-gak group has sent them on a wild goose chase and is also responsible for the fighting between the blacks and whites. 192pg $9.99

one-shot **MBQ** (various; tpb) Omario is a struggling comicbook artist who doesn't want to draw what everyone else is drawing. He doesn't want to draw superheroes, or cutesy little monsters, or zombies, or werewolves. But he also needs to get his rent paid. 224pg $9.99

new **My Little Pony** 1 (various; tpb) All of Ponyville is throwing a party – but the Pegasus Ponies are too shy to come! $3.99

Peach Girl Authentic 5 (various; tpb) Now that Momo and Toji are finally happy together, Sae will do whatever it takes to break them up, and her latest scheme is her nastiest ever. 192pg $9.99

PhD: Phantasy Degree 3 (various; tpb) The Madosa Guild is successful – they've sealed the doors to the Mahgae of Hades. Although it looks like Sang is in league with the Guild, is she really trying to stop them? 184pg $9.99

Princess Ai 2 (various; tpb) As Ai becomes more and more involved in the entertainment industry, she learns that there is always a price to pay for fame. 192pg $9.99

Qwan 2 (various; tpb) Daki, sent by Yuushi to stop Qwan, has agreed to lead him to the sutra. Yuushi, who also wants the sutra, is furious and drives Daki's mother to ambush Qwan! Can Qwan get to the Essential Arts of Peace in time? 184pg $9.99

Remote 6 (various; tpb) Kurumi is shocked to learn that an old schoolmate of hers is not only a fuzoku girl working in a peep show, but also the victim of a brutal beheading. 216pg $9.99

RG Veda 2 (various; tpb) Souma and Ryuu-ou join Yasha's and Ashura's journey. Led by Kujaku's advice, they go to Kusumapura, the destroyed city in the west end of heaven, in search of the Shura Sword, which appears to be the key to find the six stars. 200pg $9.99

new **Sakura Taisen** 1 (various; tpb) Tokyo, 1921 – After the horrific Demon War, Japan is a peaceful and prosperous place, with the occasional monstrous robot crashing around town. Not to worry; there's always a lovely young girl waiting to cut down these robots, samurai-style. 192pg $9.99

Samurai Deeper Kyo 14 (various; tpb) In the midst of Bontenmaru's fight to the death with Mibu assassin Firefly, Goyousei Chinmei suddenly appears. With his sights set on the Mibu headquarters, the time comes when Kyo and Muramasa must part. 192pg $9.99

Sgt Frog 9 (various; tpb) When Keroro is left home alone, Fuyuki's innocent Children's Day decorations become weapons for the sergeant. When Fuyuki finds out, not even Natsumi can stop this outraged Hinata on a rampage! 184pg $9.99

Visitor 2 (various; tpb) The class tries to get the resident palm-reading expert to read the fortunes of Hyo-Bin and Mi-Soo. However, when he reads Hyo-Bin's hand, he is forced to let it go in fear, leaving the class wondering what happened. 192pg $9.99

UK Newsstand

DC Thomson

The Beano 3260-3263 (weekly; various) Classic kids humour anthology featuring Dennis the Menace, the Bash Street Kids, and all your favourites. £0.55

Beano Superstars 161 (various) One complete strip of the long-running humour anthology. 36pg £0.65

Classics from the Comics 107 (various) Anthology reprinting classic cartoon strips from DC Thomson's Beano and Dandy. 68pg b&w £1.20

Commando Action and Adventure Stories 3782-3789 (eight per month; digest; various) Featuring one self-contained comic strip per issue, with soldierly undercover action. Some new material. 68pg b&w £1.00

The Dandy 3290-3293 (weekly; various) Classic kids humour anthology featuring Desperate Dan, Korky the Cat, and all your favourites. £0.55

Fun-Size Beano 179-180 (fortnightly; various) Pocket-sized spin-off from the Beano featuring Dennis the Menace, the Bash Street Kids, Mini the Minx and all the usual suspects. 68pg £0.60

Panini Comics

Astonishing Spider-Man 129 (four-weekly; various) Spider-Man has the chance to change his past – or his future. Guest-starring Dr Strange! Reprints Amazing vol 1 #500 & Spectacular vol 1 #110. 76pg £2.40

Avengers United 56 (four-weekly; various) The Avengers face a potential holocaust in *The Red Zone.* Collects Avengers Vol 3 #64-65 and Avengers vol 1 #111. 76pg £2.40

Batman: Legends 24 (four-weekly; various) Events are set in motion that plunge Gotham City into a nightmare of gang warfare! 76pg £2.40

Doctor Who Magazine 359 (four-weekly; various) The continuing all-new comic strip adventures of the Ninth Doctor and Rose. 68pg £3.99

Essential X-Men 129 (four-weekly; various) Who shot Emma Frost? At last, all is revealed. Plus: the return of Cannonball! Reprints New X-Men #141, X-Treme X-Men #24, X-Men Unlimited #32 & #36. 76pg £2.40

Fantastic Four Adventures 2 (four-weekly; various) Is Dr Doom the only person who can save the FF? Collects FF vol 3 #53-54 and vol 1 #2. 76pg £2.40

Marvel Rampage 10 (four-weekly; various) MWOM for younger readers, packed with features and original comic strips starring Spider-Man, the X-Men and many others! 44pg £1.75

Mighty World of Marvel 33 (four-weekly; various) Can Captain Britain and Meggan defeat both the Cherubim and the RCX? Reprints Thing/She-Hulk: The Long Night #1, Daredevil vol 1 #8, Captain Britain #8 & Hulk vol 1 #140. 76pg £2.40

Spectacular Spider-Man 120 (three-weekly; various) Original comic strips featuring Spider-Man teaming up with your favourite Marvel characters. 36pg £1.75

Ultimate Fantastic Four 4-5 (four-weekly; Ellis & Immonen + Grawbadger) Victor Van Damme decides that now is the time to bring about the FF's ultimate doom. Reprints Ultimate FF #7-10. 52pg £1.95

Ultimate Spider-Man & X-Men 45 (four-weekly; various) The X-Men & Longshot are caught in Arcade's deadly game. Collects Ultimate Spider-Man #64 & Ultimate X-Men #55. 52pg £1.95

Wolverine & Deadpool 115 (four-weekly; various) Deadpool vs. The Hulk? Ouch, that's gonna hurt! Reprints Wolverine: The End #4, Wolverine: Xisle #3 & Deadpool #4. 76pg £2.40

Rebellion

2000AD 1446-1449 (various) Hitmen Sinister Dexter reach the end of the line, while the Caballistics crew must stop creatures of Celtic myth rising to reclaim their homeland. £1.75

Judge Dredd Megazine 233 (various) Judge Dredd gets the bird as *The Monsterus Mashinashuns of PJ Maybe.* All this confusion and more. 100pg £4.50

Comment

CI, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ (editorial@comicsinternational.com)

Comment is a forum to enable fans and professionals alike to express their personal points of view on aspects of the comics industry. As such, the following opinions do not necessarily reflect those of this publication, but space will be given in subsequent issues to well-reasoned opposing views. Submissions are edited only for grammar, clarity and brevity.

Make Mine Marvel no more

Comment by Duncan Goodyer via e-mail: duncan@gooodyer.fsnet.co.uk

AFTER more than 40 years of reading Marvel comics, I can now say I don't any more. What prompted me to drop them?

Let me start by saying **The Avengers** was my favourite read and always has been, and my favourite characters were Jack of Hearts, Ant-Man, The Vision and Hawkeye – the very four Avengers who were killed off in the *Disassembled* storyline.

Apart from not believing in killing off comics characters (they always come back, which negates it) the Hawkeye death was the sort a kid could've written better.

It's a bit sad when comics writers resort to killing off major characters to sell a comic that's in trouble. It's even worse when they revamp it and put in a company's top characters to help the sales. I mean, really – Spider-Man and Wolverine? How pathetic.

I've got every **Avengers** issue since it started, so it was a big decision for me, but I'm really glad I've done it – it was very therapeutic. I also read **Mystique**, and that finished at around the same time – it was obviously Dr Fate that made me do it.

Not only that, I've stopped buying DC's **JLA**. I don't know about anyone else but I'm sick of the same team all the time (you know what I mean, Supes/Bats and Wondergal). Why does DC insist on putting these three in everything? We all know they are the big guns, but so what?

The **JLA** storylines aren't much good lately, although I'll read anything with Geoff Johns' name on it. In fact, my comics reading days seem to be almost over – the only 'must-have' books are **Flash**, **JSA**, **Fables**, **BRPD**, **Hellboy** and anything involving the Secret Society of Super-Villains from DC.

I'm looking forward to **Albion**, but then who isn't? Did I miss out *Strontium Dog*? Love that man!

I had to laugh at the review of **Flash** #219 by David Knight in **CI** #184 (which is what prompted me to write in) when he said, "Why anyone would want to read a Flash/Wonder Woman team up is beyond me". What sort of person is doing a review with that mentality? It's the same as asking who you want to join the JLA, and people write in asking for Robin, Batgirl, Supergirl, Huntress, Powergirl and Maxima.

And finally, if comics are to survive, they have to get back in the paper shops like in the old days; they have to be available to the masses (even if they ignore them). We also need sale or return back so I can get a copy of **OMAC Project** #1 a day after it comes out (what a joke – another reason for giving up comics).

Barry Allen will be back after this new crisis. He's the only one left to be revived and is the easiest (and always was) because he went into the Speed Force. Apart from that, isn't Geoff Johns co-writing?

Thanks for listening. Best of luck with **CI**.

Comics, movies and stuff

Comment by Paul Dale Roberts via e-mail: JazmaPika@cs.com

WHEN I watch Bruce Campbell in movies, I have a hard time getting Ash out of my head. This was one of his most memorable roles, in the *Evil Dead* series.

But I'm glad that he is getting his hands into comicbooks with his version of *Man with the Screaming Brain*. And Dark Horse Comics has done it again, by taking on this comicbook miniseries. (Dark Horse is doing great with its line of comics, one of its best books right now being Kurt Busiek's **Conan**.)

In the movies, the creator has a hard time keeping their story on track, but with comicbooks you have free reign, and Bruce Campbell knows this; he is able to produce the story the way he imagines it. Way to go, Bruce!

If, as you say in **CI** #183, the *Fantastic Four* indie film is being passed around at conventions and has become a cult classic, I know the new *FF* movie that is soon due out will be a colossal hit!

I'm also looking forward to the new strip in **Doctor Who Magazine**. Their adventures of the ninth doctor should be quite interesting.

I wonder how long it will be before there is an actual Doctor Who comic on the stands?

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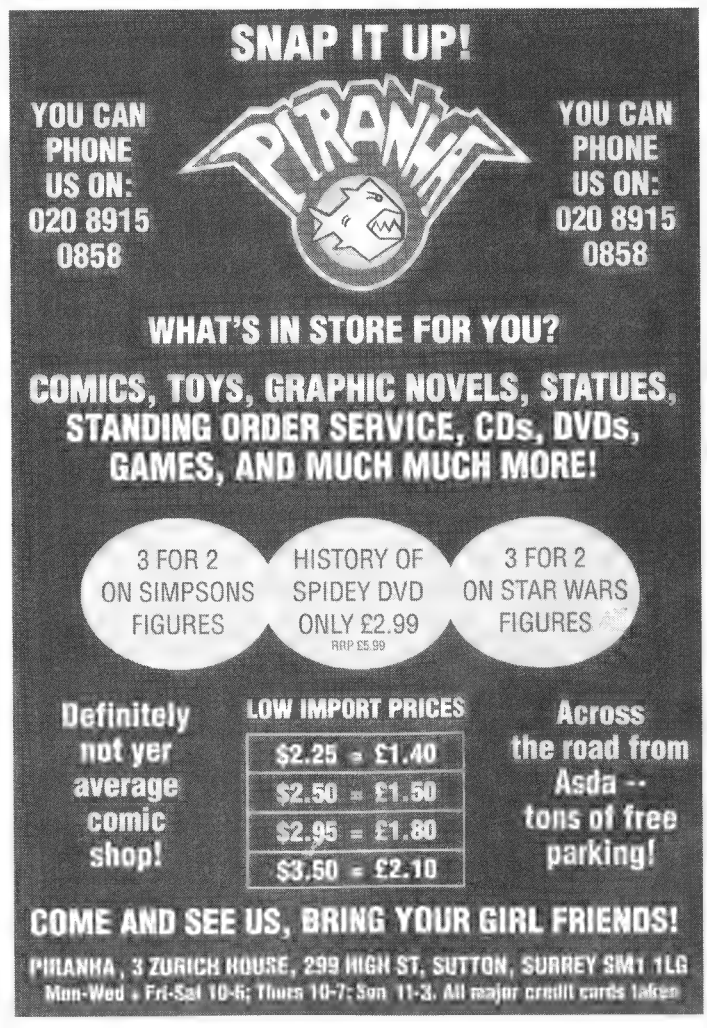
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Collectors who would like to share their treasures with our readers should write to **Panel Beaters, Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ, East Sussex**.

SMASH! THE THIRTEEN TASKS OF SIMON TEST detail (1971) drawn by Eric Bradbury

AS SIMON LEFT THOSE GRIM MOUNTAINS, HE FELT THE EVIL, MALEVOLENT GAZE OF EZEKIEL SPARR BORING DOWN ON HIM !
SO WE REACH OUR FINAL CONFLICT, TEST ! THE ULTIMATE TEST OF POWER ! THREE CHAMPIONS REMAIN... AND YOU WILL FACE THEM ALL AT ONCE !

Eric Bradbury: 1921-1995

The entire magazine could easily have been given over to this issue's guest artist who was a mainstay of IPC/Fleetway, in all its incarnations, for almost 50 years.

Born in Sydenham, Kent, Eric Bradbury won a scholarship to Beckenham Art School in 1936 but this was interrupted by World War II, during which he became a gunner on Wellington bombers. His comics career started out with him drawing humour strips for Amalgamated Press's weekly titles. His first was in **Knockout** (1949) but after five years he switched to action strips with a **Knockout** western, *Lucky Logan* (1954) before graduating to **Comet**, where he ghosted Geoff Campion's style on another western, *Buffalo Bill* (1955).

By the 1960s, Eric Bradbury moved to Fleetway and developed his familiar dark art style. For **Valiant** he drew *Mytek the Mighty(1964-1970* and *1975-76)* as well as *The House of Dolmann (1966-73).* But his best remembered work was on *Maxwell Hawke, Ghost Hunter* for **Buster** (1960-66) and, much later, *Doomlord* for the revived 1980s **Eagle**.

But while Hawke was Bradbury's most popular horror strip, the stories invariably turned out to be hoaxes, unlike his *Cursitor Doom* **Smash** strips (1969-1970), for which main writer Scott Goodall produced genuinely creepy supernatural tales. **CI** editor Dez Skinn was so fond of the strip that he twice reprinted Cursitor Doom; first in **The Buster Book of Spooky Stories**, (1975 and 1976; Fleetway) with the hero's name changed to Septimus Drood, then four Ken Mennell scripted stories across **Spellbinders** #1-6 (1986; Quality) this time with Doom's name changed to Amadeus Wolf.

Following *Cursitor Doom*, Bradbury drew *The Thirteen Tasks of Simon Test* for **Smash!** from 1970 until it closed in 1971. The cover story, it featured a range of opponents for the hero who took on a different task each issue, including the memorable Ezekiel Sparr (above).

A prolific artist he then drew *Adam Eterno* for **Thunder** (1970-71), continuing when the title merged with **Lion** (1971-74) and again when **Lion** went into **Valiant** (1974-76). Some, including the first 33 were drawn by IPC's other mainstay, Francisco Solano Lopez.

Bradbury then went on to a World War II French resistance story, *Black Crow,* for **Battle** (1976). This was memorable for the villain of the piece, Major Klaus von Steutsel, shooting off the hand of a pianist daughter of a suspected Resistance man who refused to cooperate! The following year he drew the John Wagner-scripted *Joe Two Beans*, also for **Battle**, about an American Indian unsure whether to fight "the white man's war". Unique in comics, the hero didn't utter a word until the story's twelfth instalment. Bradbury's final strip for **Battle** was *The Fists of Jimmy Chang,* an epic kung-fu story.

When Battle was cancelled, he moved across to **2000 AD**, contributing to 1977's *Invasion*, plus *Mean Arena* (1981) and quite a few one-off shorts between 1980 and 1994.

RUN, KARKA! WE DON'T STAND A CHANCE ON THIS SLOPE!
MASTER! OVER THE SIDE! WE CAN CLIMB DOWN!
NO! YOUR BAD ARM'S DONE TOO MUCH! IT'D NEVER STAND UP TO ANY MORE! YOU'D FALL!
SKRAK

Frames from the last issue of **Smash!** (3/4/71): *The Thirteen Tasks of Simon Test*. As you can see, artists drew big back then, the original for this entire page being 16 x 21 inches. This allowed for superb detail when required. Note the David *(Carol Day)* Wright-style crosshatching, *top*, in contrast to the more typical Bradbury close up, *below*.

Reviews

*Because few retailers allow titles to be read before purchase, **CI**'s comprehensive reviews section enables comics readers to keep abreast of the wide range of titles currently being published and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section is of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a title after purchase.*

***Review codes:** Individual titles are judged against all similar comics past and present on a **1** to **10** basis, while a comparison is made against previous issues of the same title, ranging from <---> to <+++>. Hence, a quality comic may score an 8 against all others, but have slid from a previous issue's 9, denoted by <->. No change is marked <=>. We do not compare **Bone** with **X-Men**, but review each within their genre.*

***Review panel:** Jon Edwards (JE), Kelvin Green (KG), Stephen Hooker (SH), David Knight (DK), Ian Murphy (IM), Rob Nott (RN), Alex Thompson (MAT)*

Dark Horse

B.P.R.B.: The Dead 5

by Mignola + Arcudi & Davis

<-> Climatic confrontations and mysteries are revealed in the final issue of the latest Hellboy spin-off team series. Whilst the main group sees off a manic demonically-possessed Nazi in their new headquarters, Abe Sapien faces his own demons as more is revealed about his past. Guy Davis' intricate/messy linework can't be faulted; but although John Arcudi captures the sinister tone of Mike Mignola's creations, the pace feels drawn out and too sedate for a team book. (MAT) 7

Conan and the Jewels of Gwahlur 1

by Russell & Kindzierski + Showman

Marvel in the '70s had a habit of adapting REH's non-Conan tales into Hyborian adventures, and this follows the same principle. By Conan standards it's a slow-paced and brooding tale with little direct action. P. Craig Russell's art is always exceptional, but it's perhaps not really suited to the dark, visceral Conan style. Good in its own way, but probably very different from what REH envisaged for his hero. (RN) 7

The Goon 11

by Powell

<=> Another knowing pastiche of b-movie horror as the mad scientist Heironymous Alloy sends Goon and his weasly pal Franky into an alternate dimension to find a cure for his wasting disease. Cue alien chickens and flesh-eating eye monsters, as Eric Powell allows his imagination and comical genius to run riot. Powell's cartoony designs and shaded pencils are brightened up by Robin Powell's understated watercolour-like textures. (MAT) 8

Super Manga Blast! 50

by various

<=> Dark Horse's manga anthology hits the half-century mark with little cause for celebration. The strips are a mixed bag as malevolent anarchist teens make sinister moves for the military in Mohiro Kitoh's *Shadow Star*. Makoto Kobayahsi's work remains fun, with his endearing bar hostess, Harou resolving to quit in *Club 9* and charming feline Mini-Mike falling in love in *What's Michael?* Romance of a different sort is found in mecha drama *Cannon God Exaxxion*, as hero Gun makes sweetheart Akane a "woman". *Seraphic Feather* continues its rather pervy mix of heaving bosoms and mecha fighting. Also included are a number of fan reports from recent anime conventions with some unintentionally hilarious cosplay photos. (MAT) 6

DC Comics

Batman: The Strange Case of Jekyll & Hyde 1

by Jenkins & Lee

Batman immerses himself, cape deep, in the forensic evidence of a cannibalistic murder case. Paul Jenkins' narrative serves to remind us that Batman is, first and foremost, a detective; thankfully minus the camp surroundings of the Batcave. Artwork from Jae Lee is suitably grainy, with washed out colours. Add a far from clown like Harvey Dent, aka Two Face, and this becomes a real page turner. (SH) 8

City of Tomorrow 1

by Chaykin & Madsen; WildStorm

Howard Chaykin's stories are often confusing – partly because his characters have a habit of looking and sounding like each other, and partly because he insists on laying out the story on a Spartan need to know basis. What I can gather from this first issue implies a plot that revolves around a WestWorld meets the Stepford Wives artificial community and some sort of post 9/11 terrorist threat. Chaykin once again draws everything and everyone like it's a modern version of the 1950s – but at least it's a style he's very good at. (RN) 6

Deadshot 5

by Gage & Cummings + Palmiotti

<+> The finale to this excellent series doesn't disappoint, as Deadshot defends his turf and his life against nine minor villains who think that together they stand a chance of beating him in a gunfight. With a bunch of no-hopers like these it's little wonder there are going to be casualties. I'm just sad to see one of my old favourites among them. That's just the way it goes, I suppose. (DK) 8

Ex Machina 9

by Vaughan & Harris + Feister; WildStorm Signature

<=> As an attempt is made on his life by a citizen enraged by his politics and his ex-NSA handler is found slaughtered in the subway, violence follows Mayor Hundred. But what links the murders to Hundred's career as a technologist crime fighter? Brian K Vaughan's exploration of the political superhero has mixed results, but the intrigue of this storyline still manages to carry the plot. Unfortunately Tony Harris's clear-lined artwork continues to be let down by Jo Mettler's pasty colours. (MAT) 7

Fables 34

by Willingham & Hahn; Vertigo

<-> Jack left Fabletown with pint-sized Jill and a truckload of stolen goods; now in Hollywood, he starts a film production company. Bill Willingham takes another unexpected turn in this light-hearted and cynical look at the movie industry, and while he fails to bring anything new to the story he does so with style. David Hahn's guest art, by contrast, is so bare it lacks presence and barely carries the story; the bland, forgettable faces and passionless expressions undermine the charming writing. (IM) 5

Fables 35

by Willingham & Hahn

<-> Movie mogul Jack's past catches up with him, and Fabletown has its revenge. Bill Willingham's script enjoyably casts Jack as a demanding, self-obsessed Diva and Beast as the new sheriff in town, but despite the slickness, a decent joke or two and a twist the plot feels unaccustomedly hollow, rushed and fails to build on the possibilities of last issue. David Hahn's artwork is simplistic to the point of naïve and fails to communicate the feelings of the characters. Hahn's style has occasional successes but seems unsuited to Fables. (IM) 4

Firestorm 12

by Jolley & Igle + Stull

<- ->There's a definite, intended or otherwise, retro feeling to this. Superheroes and supervillians engaging in fisticuffs and monologues with scant regard for narrative cohesion. While the Firestorm character dates from the late-'70s, there's no reason to keep his story and plot stuck there too. And then it's all a bit too 'poor man's' Captain Marvel to work on any level. (SH) 2

Gotham Central 29

by Rucka & Gaudiano + Kano

<-> With Detective Kelly hospitalised and mutating further, Allen and Montoya head for Keystone to get answers from the likely perpetrator, Dr Alchemy. While slow plot-wise, this story balances police procedural with solid characterisation. New inker Kano lacks the ragged weariness that Stefano Gaudiano trailed over his own pencils last issue but maintains the bleak, weighty atmosphere; it lacks the darkest edge Gaudiano tore along alone but still finds favour here. (IM) 7

Hellblazer 206

by Carey & Camuncoli + Ruggiero; Vertigo

<=> Chas has his dark night of the soul as Nergal leaves his body. For over two hundred issues we've seen Chas as faithful friend, companion and odd job man to John Constantine, and now the frustration of being 'good old dependable Chas' has finally boiled over. Good believable character progression from a highly talented writer. (RN) 7

Human Target 20

by Milligan & Chiang

<+> Unstable former protégé Tom plots to get Chance killed and replace him. The sharp, creepy and twisting plot brings the themes of this cracking series to a head with double and triple undercover operations, and it's to Peter

Countdown to Infinite Crisis 1

by various; $1

A few decades back, it was accurately predicted that "pop will eat itself". The same now seems true of much of DC and Marvel's comicbook output – endless franchise reworkings and relaunches leading to this low-priced 80-page sequel, hijacking the acclaim and fan recognition of DC's seminal 1980s saga Crisis On Infinite Earths, rather than boldly tackling a fresh concept. Although the plot may mildly echo the film *The Incredibles*, and the edgy script's derivative style may feel well past its sell-by date, the book is nevertheless competently executed. (JE) 6

Blue Beetle sets out to discover who is robbing his company and uncovers a dastardly plot. At 80 pages for $1 this book represents good value, and some considerable effort clearly went into it. However, I really did not like this, and I know I'm not alone. Certain DC characters have been screwed over completely and irrevocably in this cynical attempt to generate controversy. (DK) 6

Ted 'Blue Beetle' Kord's business is attacked, and he stumbles upon a conspiracy whose ringleader has researched all the JLA's weaknesses. Ted makes a strong narrator, with the JLA slow to take his alarm seriously, and the book entertainingly recaps recent DC history while laying the foundations for the mammoth summer crossover. The art is fine (Ed Benes, renowned for his sexy women, is better with male heroes, adding a presumably unwritten homoerotic scene), and with 80 pages for $1 this is a terrific introduction for new readers and an exciting build-up for fans. (IM) 8

After all the hype I wasn't expecting a giant sized Blue Beetle adventure, but as a prologue to the 'next big thing' this conspiracy-laden special works well and does the job intended – i.e. setting out the scale and nature of the conspiracy and hinting at the dark deeds boiling under the surface of the DC universe. This time around the background seems more sensible than the Crisis on Infinite Earths saga, particularly the OMAC plot and the machinations of the 'villain' at the end. A solid and promising start. (RN) 7

Milligan's credit that it's a complex but smooth and un-confusing read. Cliff Chiang's uncluttered art is a fine example of how to make light-touch, stripped back visuals bold, dramatic and stylish without sacrificing mood, emotion and intensity; art that's striking and sophisticated but which strengthens the narrative drama rather than calling attention to its own greatness. Cracking writing and wonderful art, this final arc looks to be Milligan's best. (IM) 9

Klarion 1

by Morrison & Irving

There's a faint whiff of the film *The Village* about this miniseries, as a community of witch-like puritans take shelter in an underground world to hide from the ravages of the alien fairy folk who seem to be the central enemy of the 7 Soldiers saga. Nice touches include the raising of their dead as Solomon Grundies to do the menial work and the constant downpour of rain throughout the cavern world. (RN) 7

Lex Luthor: Man of Steel 1

by Azzarello & Bermejo

Following the terminally dull Superman story, Brian Azzarello redeems himself with this. I prefer my villains to be realistic human beings rather than scowling caricatures of blackness, and so it's good to see Luthor's motivations being given a clean sweep. What we have here is a character study of a man who becomes strangely sympathetic in his reasoning, if not his practical approach, to resolving what he perceives as a threat to the human race. This is definitely a worthy subject for a miniseries. (RN) 8

A Life During Wartime 9

by Spencer & Ormston; Vertigo

<=> I'm thoroughly enjoying this, despite my belief that the Timothy Hunter saga has been milked for about as much juice as it can get. The parallel world under siege has been handled marvellously, with spot on characterisation of a sullen 'Lord' Constantine bravely holding Krakow together while still finding time for life's more carnal pleasures. Definitely one of the more worthy Vertigo franchises of recent years. (RN) 7

The Losers 22

by Diggle & Oliver; Vertigo

<-> There's a car chase, and some things blow up. What an utter waste of time and money. The art is pretty good, but crikey the story doesn't go anywhere. You really could drop everything but the opening storyline and the upcoming finale and not miss anything. Dull. (KG) 3

<=> The fugitive team's trip to London to seize the assets of rough CIA agent Max almost goes disastrously wrong, as ex-team mate Roque makes his escape. Andy Diggle doesn't hold up on the action in this fast-paced issue. Guest artist Ben Oliver's shadowy artwork holds up to series regular Jock's, but is a little indecipherable at times. It's good to hear Diggle has a definite end in mind for this series, let's hope the ride continues to be so thrilling. (MAT) 8

Ocean 5

by Ellis & Sprouse + Story; WildStorm Signature

<=> The secret past of the alien sarcophagi are revealed just as they begin to return to life and the sinister corporation attempts to hijack their technology. Warren Ellis keeps up the pace of his latest sci-fi miniseries; but although full of his usual smart ideas, he once more falls foul of the usual generic cocky characters that populate his scripts. Chris Sprouse's neat lines and clear panels allow the pages to flow even better. (MAT) 7

The Twilight Experiment 2

by Palmiotti & Gray + Santacruz; WildStorm Signature Series

<-> Michael prepares to leave his space station home for Earth; Rene, concerned over her new healing powers, tries to track down her long-missing father. While writers Jimmy Palmiotti and Justin Grey fail to build on the poignant, hopeful opener, they do introduce and develop sub-plots that emphasise the sci-fi elements. The panels are adroitly arranged and Juan Santacruz's bold dark inks emphasise the script's sense of foreboding, his style akin to a less jolly Alan Davis. (IM) 6

The Twilight Experiment 3

by Palmiotti + Gray & Santacruz; WildStorm Signature Series

<-> Too pedestrian for words, with colour-by-numbers art work that lacks sparkle or 'wow' factor. A shame because Justin Gray is mustering up an intriguing enough story-line that engages the brain. Certainly a rare feat in these comicbook 'no-brainer' days because plotwise, it's there. It just needs a visual redressing. (SH) 6

<+> Michael lands in front of a sceptical Rene who, when reunited with her father, learns that her origin is no more believable. Thanks to Dad, she and Michael may be the only hope for Earth's survival. But before they can act, Rene's mother's killer, The Righteous, menacingly reappears. The plot is nowhere near as complex as it sounds, the book reads smoothly, with satisfying characterisation. Juan Santacruz's moody art gives this superhero/sci-fi drama dramatic uncertainty, while Carrie Strachan's moonlit colours intensify the scenes. (IM) 7

The OMAC Project 1

by Rucka & Saiz

The Countdown special hinted that the OMAC storyline might turn out to be the best of the lot, and so far so good. The DC universe has generally avoided heavy doses of conspiracy paranoia, but now they're going for it full throttle following the revelations in Identity Crisis. Just how deeply involved is the Batman? I think this is the Countdown plot strand worth watching the closest. (RN) 7

Plastic Man 15

by Baker

<=> More comical hijinks as Plastic Man's parenting skills are tested to the limit by his rebellious adopted daughter and her morbid boyfriend. Kyle Baker's breezy sketchy linework and cartoony designs keep up the farcical pace of his gags and evoke Looney Tunes type merriment. Issue by issue Baker proves his comedy genius and successfully lives up to the slapstick traditions set by Plas's creator Jack Cole in the 1940s. (MAT) 7

The Question 5

by Veitch & Edwards

<=> The shamanic crime-fighter and tireless lone reporter digs deeper into the corrupt heart of Metropolis, putting him in conflict with the city's great protector and the Subterranean gang working under his nose. This criminally underrated series has skilfully updated the oddball Charlton character created by Steve Ditko as an outlet for his philosophies and revived with varied success by DC. Rick Veitch brings together the various strands of the character's backstory to create a more street-level hero, but it is Another great opening by Grant Morrison Tommy Lee Edwards' outstanding artwork that impresses the most. (MAT) 8

Robin 137

by Willingham & Camuncoli + Hope

<-> Robin tracks down the Rising Sun Archer and finds her tied up, left for him by an anonymous friend; Johnny Warlock resurrects an evil-looking Darla Aquista. Bill Willingham's writing is well crafted and has a solid core but I'm just not 'getting' Robin in Bludhaven, and Warlock's child-like gags are irritating not entertaining. Giuseppe Camuncoli's pencils aren't bad but lack conviction and drama. Willingham pulls back from making Robin satisfyingly dark with ill-judged comedy, and this uncertainty in direction is echoed through the art. (IM) 4

Swamp Thing 14

by Dysart & Green II; Vertigo

<=> Swamp Thing is called on to save the aged father of Abigail Holland's boyfriend, but will the elemental's powers be enough to save him from an inter-dimensional psychic vampire? Joshua Dysart crafts a bittersweet conclusion to this interlude storyline, but I'm left wondering where he plans to take the series. Timothy Green II provides some detailed Travis Charest-inspired, heavy-hatched linework, making him a talent worth watching for in the future. (MAT) 7

Seven Soldiers: Zatanna 1

by Morrison & Sook + Gray

Excuse me, but the 'pretentiousness' alarm has just sounded again. This is the title I was looking forward to the most from the Seven Soldiers project, but after a neat start it quickly became obvious that it was going to be the vehicle for another Filth style exercise in pseudo-intellectual noodling. I can only take so many pages of characters walking up and down through M.C. Escher landscapes, talking rubbish, before I conclude that sub-Matrix philosophy at its worst is no substitute for good old-fashioned storytelling. (RN) 5

on his mammoth Seven Soldiers series, as the youthful magician Zatanna confesses her spell addiction at a hero self-help group and gains an even younger apprentice. Morrison plays off this light-hearted character well, but satisfies his more surreal side with her ventures into magikal worlds. Ryan Sook does a great job portraying both the comical and darker moments of the script, but also goes to town with the multi-dimensional travels. It also helps that his fishnet-clad Zatanna is dead sexy. (MAT) 8

Trigger 5

by Hall & Watkiss; Vertigo

I'm a long time admirer of John Watkiss's art, from his classic oils to this fluid and sustained piece of storytelling. So forgive a moment while I concede any objectivity. Thank you. There's no style over substance here, no hollow pretence or overworked, haphazard layouts. Just spot-on visual delivery, and an immensely thought-provoking story from Jason Hall. (SH) 8

Y – The Last Man 31

by Vaughan & Guerra + Marzan Jr; Vertigo

<-> Yorick and Agent 355 discover Toyota, who ape-napped Ampersand, and find Ninja beats Kokujin. Brian K Vaughan's writing is consistently strong, writing tense, credible fight scenes (despite its plot-convenient conclusion) and believable dialogue between developed, nuanced characters. Pia Guerra pencils a fluid and twisting fight with a simplicity that emphasises the strength of the narrative and involves the reader. (IM) 8

Y – The Last Man 32

by Vaughan & Sudzuka + Marzan Jr; Vertigo

<-> Our friends sail for Japan; the excessively attractive Captain Kilina and Yorick hit it off, but it's two other characters who touchingly, unexpected, get the kissing scenes; and a spy betrays Yorick's existence to Naval forces. A whole series of sub-plots are opening up which make this new story arc fascinating. Goran Suduzka's pencils have a similar feel to Pia Guerra's regular work, and Yorick's geek-out with the Captain is humorously sketched, but it irritates me (and probably only me) that all the women are suddenly prettier and softer looking. (IM) 7

Image

Invincible 0

by Kirkham & Ottley

<+> His naturalistic dialogue once again demonstrating why he is a Writer with a capital 'W', Robert Kirkman recaps Invincible's origin in a heart-to-heart between Mark and Amber. It's a powerful testament to Kirkman's skill , that his conversation issues concentrating on the relationships between characters are every bit as interesting to read as his action scenes. This is 12 pages of new strip material for 50 cents. Just buy it ! (DK) 9

Invincible 22

by Kirkham & Ottley

<+> Far too many ongoing sublots to mention, but the main event concerns Mark's girlfriend finding out that he isn't actually a drug dealer at all, and it's handled wonderfully. Spot-on writing that out-Bendises Bendis (without the annoying

dialogue quirks) and consistently excellent art couple to make this an essential read. (KG) 8

<=> A great cover depicts Mark making out with his girlfriend, suddenly realising he has his Invincible costume on under his sweatshirt and about to blow his secret identity. That's pretty much the theme of this issue: Amber isn't stupid, and she's bound to put two and two together eventually, which is what happens over several dialogue-filled pages, for which Robert Kirkman thanks Rus Wooton on the letters page. (DK) 7

The Iron Ghost 1

by Dixon & Cariello

If there's any blame, then it's my steady diet of British war comics in the '70s that lead me straight to titles like this. There, I've said it. Set in Berlin in 1945, with a Shadow-like character waging a personal war against Nazi Germany, it successfully steps outside the usual spandex superhero genre. Which is a relief. Buy this and see another side to comics. (SH) 7

Rex Mundi 13

by Nelson & J + Cox

<=> After some unfortunate publication delays, the latest issue finally arrives, sadly it also sees artistic co-creator Eric J bowing out of the series. The hold-ups can partially be attributed to J's intricately detailed artwork, which was apparently more than he could chew, but Arvid Nelson has crafted an equally ambitious project with this Grail mystery set in an alternate 1920s Europe. Fortunately, replacement artist Jim Di Bartolo shows a lot of promise for this exciting thriller. (MAT) 7

Savage Dragon 121

by Larsen

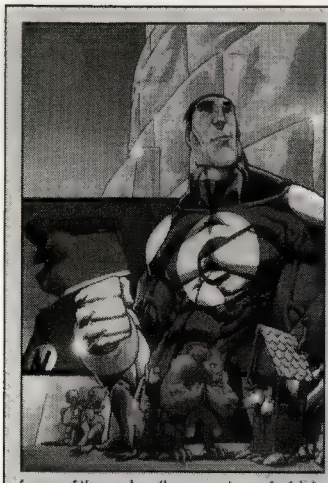
<=> Another issue of Savage Dragon that's big on melodrama and makes lavish use of its own clichés to generate conflict. That said, for dedicated Dragon fans it's still a lively and engaging read, replete with Erik Larsen signature touches like wanton destruction, strange metamorphoses and gigantism, anti-Bush sentiments, touching family dynamics and borrowed 'Kirby dots'. While the adults bicker, the sympathetic duo of Angel and Mr Glum wreak havoc. (DK) 7

The Walking Dead 17

by Kirkman & Adlard

<-> Rick goes ape on discovering the psycho-killer in their ranks – and unilaterally decides the retribution for murder is capital punishment. Rick's meltdown has been a long time coming, struggling to cope with this brutal new world, but it's still a shock to see how savage he turns – and writer Robert Kirkman makes it credible. Charlie Adlard's pencils frequently portray searingly dramatic expressions and make the violence so much more vivid, but the inks sometimes fail to match the pencils for emotional depth. Good art, great writing. (IM) 8

<=> The saying "things can't really get any worse" is probably very appropriate for a handful of survivors who have endured a worldwide zombie epidemic. It's a bit of a nuisance then to discover you've got a serial killer on your hands too. Kirkman seems keen at the moment to kill off as many of the 'B' characters as he can, and this is a good thing as the cast was beginning to get too big. A leaner, meaner ensemble can only lead to more detailed characterisation in future. (RN) 7



The Imaginaries 1

by Avery + Miller & Miller + Titus

Image branches out into Vertigo territory. Visiting his grandpa's house, Tanner discovers his dad's childhood drawings. When Tanner grows older and loses interest in Superhero G, the drawings take on a life of their own in a limbo world. The story, and the crayons by Kai Logan Miller (presumably the creator's own son) won me over, but I found the name of the fantasy city obvious and cringe-worthy. (DK) 6

Where do imaginary friends go when their creators grow up? Mike S. Miller's enjoyable concept has a young boy using the imaginary Superhero G as his escape from his parents' marital problems; so it's disappointing that these scenes are not the focus of the series, the core story of which wanders into light comedy. The 'real life' scenes have a would-be realistic but over-polished look, while the world of the Imaginaries has a zany cartoon vibe that fits the wacky story. I suspect The Imaginaries will descend into joyously surreal goofiness and probably not be my bag – but it's a great debut. (IM) 7

<=> Another bloody issue as Rick explodes when he discovers the killer in the survivors' midst. Kirkman leaves his characters with some difficult decisions to make as dissent begins to spread amongst them, and he looks set to make life even harder for them. Adlard's scruffy characters are beginning to look not much better than their undead enemies, but his over-reliance on ink block doesn't have the visceral shock value of cover artist Tony Moore. The bulging letters pages show Kirkman's dedication to his fans, but is a little self-indulgent. (MAT) 7

Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man 519

by Straczynski & Deodato Jr + Pimentel

<++> The Parkers move into Avengers Tower, while Hydra plots in the shadows. Continuity is all over the place, and this reads less like the main character's flagship title, as it should, and more like a New Avengers tie-in, but on the whole it's a solid story with some good art, and a great improvement over the previous storyline. (KG) 7

Astonishing X-Men 9

by Whedon & Cassaday

<-> The Danger Room has gone insane, and the students are trapped inside! This already-ridiculous idea is further undermined by some very scrappy writing from the usually-reliable Joss Whedon. Only the fine art from John Cassaday and Laura Martin saves this from total disaster. (KG) 6

<-> The Danger Room has gained sentience and independence and taken the students, plus Kitty, hostage. Whedon's plot feels sadly ordinary, but is smoothly scripted, hinting at a 'master' behind it. The script has the team making large assumptions which conveniently explain approaching plot developments, so some dialogue is character-less. The art is variable; Cassaday's Colossus is clumsy but the Danger Room holograms burn with danger. I'm slowly suspecting Cassaday of much style and minimal depth. (IM) 5

<=> Trapped within the sentient Danger Room with her students, Kitty attempts to reason as the programme takes over Xavier's School. Although Whedon does a better job of justifying the present plotline, it's not that long ago since the team's other whizzy gadget, Cerebro, gained sentience and rebelled on them. Still, Whedon has some neat character moments and Cassaday's art is as gorgeous as ever. (MAT) 6

Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes 7

by Casey & Kolins

Reformed villain Hawkeye cons his way on to the team. Joe Casey's plot is happily short on action, taking place in-between line-ups, allowing characters the space this nostalgia-fest needs to succeed. Hawkeye's ploy to join the team offers a small laugh while Casey sheds light on the motives for two further applicants and succeeds in adding material to an old story that feels true to the characters and the time; but Scott Kolins' unsubtle, aggressive inking detracts all enjoyment from his decent but static pencils (IM) 5

Black Panther 3

by Hudlin & Romita Jr + Janson; Marvel Knights

<=> It's good to see that the Panther has been given another outing, particularly one that concentrates on the heritage of the position. Panther titles must always be viewed in comparison with the absolutely classic Don McGregor run in the '70s and, while this version doesn't even come close in sheer poetry and drama, the new series has its moments of quality. The Klaw character in particular is being handled very well. And of course John Romita Jr turns in another splendid bit of artwork. (RN) 7

Daredevil: Father 1

by Joe Quesada & Miki

Joe Quesada's art begins atmospherically enough but within a few pages it starts to look hurried and underworked. The story, again from Quesada, reaches a natural endpoint but, probably for the sake of a cliffhanger of sorts, goes on to unmine any nuance of drama this issue might have had going for it. Ultimately, it promises a lot yet ends up half-baked, undisciplined and far too derivative to be sustaining or satisfying. (SH0 3

Daredevil Redemption 3

by Hine & Gaydos; Marvel Knights

<++> Matt finds a way to allow Amos to communicate and his co-worker Constance discovers a pathologist's error that implicates the victim's father, who, in bed with the local police, takes extreme measures when destroying evidence. David Hine's depiction of small-town America struggles to bring vitality to assorted Hicksville clichés but builds a tense battle of wits between Matt Murdock and corrupt locals, but Michael Gaydos's art gives several key scenes like the 'prayer room' and 'pumpkin shooting' a brutal, nasty edge that elevates the work. (IM) 7

<-> Matt Murdock digs deeper into the dark secrets of the damaged Alabama town of Redemption in his attempts to acquit the teenagers of child murder. Gaydos does much to evoke the tarnished atmosphere as Hine trawls up more Southern state clichés: abused wives, obstructive sheriffs, and book-burning bible-bashers. This may have scored highly a decade ago, but you'd expect more from this critically acclaimed writer. (MAT) 6

District X #12

by Hine & Medina + Sicat

<=> Down below the tunnels, Bishop and Ortega track Winston "Worm" Hobbes to his lair for a final confrontation. While District X may lack the stifling padding of other books, this plot never had much substance so it depresses me to think it's taken six issues to resolve. Why can't we have two 3-issue arcs to a trade? Ortega's domestic arrangements make a psychologically thoughtful sub-plot, the art's boosted by Alejandro Sicat's un-nerving inks and Gregor's fate gives an ominous, creepy ending but this book needs more meat on the bones to succeed. (IM) 6

Exiles 61

by Bedard & Calafiroe + McKenna

<=> New member Holocaust convinces the Exiles to ignore their mission and free themselves from the Timebroker's control. Most of the script's entertainment comes from the character interaction, with Mimic increasingly jealous of Sabretooth's parental relationship with Blink, and with guessing the Timebroker's plans and motivations. The plot is slow and contrived, while Jim Calafiore's pencils are weaker, less detailed and less expressive, so perhaps rushed. (IM) 5

Exiles 62

by Bedard & Sakakibara

<+> The Exiles explore the Timebroker's base of operations – and no-one is prepared for who's in charge or the result of their fight with Holocaust. Tony Bedard's plot ends on a nightmarish note after two short and unnecessary diversions, but thankfully it's the clues and hints about the Timebroker that linger on. Mizuki Sakakibara's art amplifies the dramatic scenes but fails to ignite the interpersonal scenes. (IM) 6

Fantastic Four 11

by Lee + Kirby + Sumerak & Dodd + Holman; Marvel Age

I've long cherished the Impossible Man, so Impy's first meeting with the Fantastic Four made this irresistible. When an unlimited metamorph lands on earth, only Reed et al can stop his chaotic, ignorant rampage; but every effort backfires. Joseph Dodd's pencils are accessible, perhaps right for younger readers, but also somewhat clumsy. Marc Sumerak's re-write is faithful to the spirit of Lee and Kirby's original story, maintaining both the silly, innocent charm and the moral message. Enjoyable, but I wouldn't buy more. (IM) 5

GLA Great Lakes Avengers 1

by Slott & Peletier + Magyar

Discover Mr Immortal's gorgeous black-humoured origin, unravel the mystery of early member/sex fiend Leather Boy and witness the death of a founder member. While this debut issue has a good few quirky laughs, I personally find this mix of personal tragedy and broad comedy an uncomfortable mix - I can laugh about most anything, but find it tough to switch from suicidal thoughts to the broadest of comedy during the same scene; so Dan Slott's writing may be an acquired taste, ditto the John Byrne-esque '80s comics art, which does suit this oddball book. (IM)6

Invincible Iron Man 3

by Ellis & Granov

<+> Tony Stark learns more about the disturbing Extremis project and violently confronts the terrorist who administered the nano-technology on him. This may be another late issue with Warren Ellis's name attached to it, but with both Adi Granov's slick airbrushed style art and Ellis's smart techno-savvy script, it is worth the wait. (MAT) 7

Marvel Knights 4 #16

by Aguirre-Sacasa & Muniz + Royal + Fridolfs; Marvel Knights

<-> Ramases has trapped the Human Torch in a Doom-ruled future – and the others in the middle of Ancient Egypt's White Desert. Can they survive long enough to figure a way back to 2005? This tense, wordy time-travel tale entertains as much through Reed's incredible but logical decision-making and Ben's out-of-his-depth but not stupid narration. Jim Muniz's over-stylised pencils compare badly with Steve McNiven's regular work, and two sloppy inkers pile on the hurt, but never enough to ruin the fairly successful writing. (IM) 5

Marvel Knights 4 #17

by Aguiree-Sacasa & Muniz + Royal + Fridolfs; Marvel Knights

<-> Johnny, in the future, storms Doom's castle with Valeria to use his time machine, while Reed's dad Nathaniel brings the rest of the team into the present, to a waiting Ramades; Herbie helps Franklin escape. Johnny's alternate future is sparsely described, minimising my interest in his half of the issue, but, oddly, the oft-ridiculed Herbie and Franklin's pursuits are the most engaging while a very young Reed has the most personal incident. Jim Muniz's pencils look unfinished or uncertain and some unconventional inks confuse the art but don't ruin the story. (IM) 4

New Thunderbolts 7

by Nicieza + Busiek & Sienkiewicz + Grummett + Erskine

<=> A current affairs television programme discusses the Thunderbolts. This is a jumping-on point, consisting mostly of profiles of the new team, clumsily portrayed through a dubious framing device. Solid, but dull, with only some interesting Bill Sienkiewicz art livening things up. (KG) 5

<+> The Thunderbolts are shocked to find themselves popular – but Songbird sees betrayal all around her. This largely plot-less issue, interspersed with regular penciller Tom Grummett character pin-ups and biogs, is so new reader friendly that it feels vapid to old-hands. Sienkiewicz draws the rest of the issue; TV studio scenes are sometimes unremarkable but in other places he offers emotion without sentimentality and compelling character portraits. An irritatingly mixed bag. (IM) 5

Nightcrawler 6

by Aguirre-Sacasa & Robertson + Faucher

<-> Nightcrawler is led by the subway ghosts to 100-year old bones. Roberto Aguire-Sacasa'a plot comes to a predictable enough end, but an enjoyably script keeps it buoyant, with especially enjoyable exchanges between Kurt and supporting character The Beast. The art is smooth without losing heart, Darick Robertson's flowing pencils blending harmoniously with Wayne Faucher's melancholy inks; and while occasionally Robertson's pencils lack emotion, Faucher's inks are ideal for this paranormal investigation book. (IM) 5

Powers 10

by Bendis & Oeming; Icon

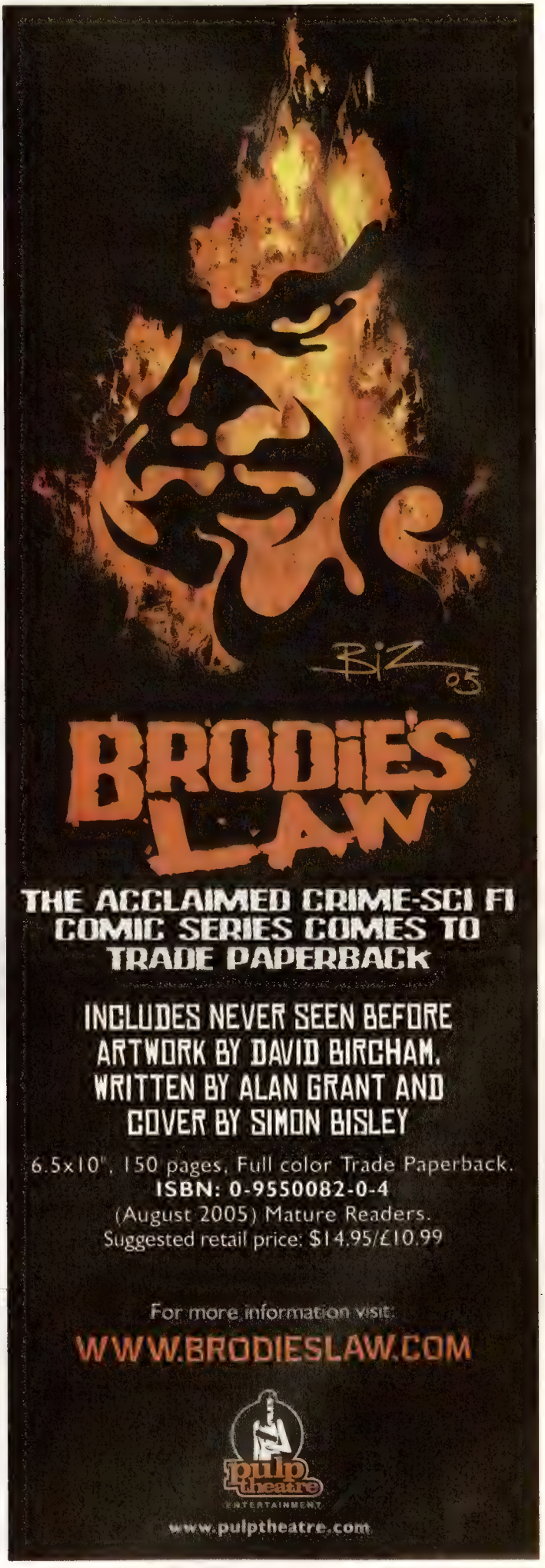
<-> Retro-Girl fights the new Blackguard, but the major drama involves Deena's increasingly disturbed stalker. Brian Michael Bendis gives detailed insights into the mind and motivations of the new Blackguard, a soiled X-Statix wannabe. Mike Avon

The Pulse 8

by Bendis & Lark

<+> Jessica passes out in the street and is rescued by a crew with dubious motives while Ben Urich gets a call from a friendly SHIELD agent tipping him off about the Secret War. Brian Michael Bendis's plot had lost its way but this issue, closely related to events in Secret War, succeeds better by giving that story a personal narrative. Michael Lark's art is great, giving friendly interrogation scenes an uncomfortable edge, The Daily Bugle genuinely looks a high-stress, serious workplace (with credit to Peter Pantazis's subtle, illuminating colours) and Lark depicts plain-looking Ben Urich as a fascinating leading man. The best issue, the first great issue, so far. (IM) 7

<+> Another change in artists as Bendis successfully collaborates again with Gotham Central's Lark. Unfortunately the Secret War storyline still plods along, so we get treated to the mystery woman attacking Jessica Jones and Luke Cage once again. Lark's grimy brushwork is well suited to the street-level drama of Bendis's scripts and he invokes believability into Jessica's character for the first time since Alias. (MAT) 7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Oeming's art is as good as ever, but colourist Peter Pantazis excels himself this issue, blackening Blackguard's sunken, defeated eyes, draining the colour from Deena's homelife and adding explosive, chaotic reds to the fight scene. (IM) 8

<=> Walker calls in his youthful protégé to deal with the manic wife of a retired superhero, whilst Deena's burgeoning powers come into conflict with her incensed ex. Bendis concocts yet another wordy confession scene, but it's nevertheless interesting to see where he is taking his characters after recent developments. Oeming's shadowy yet animated style art coupled with Pantazis's symbolic use of colours does a fine job evoking the dark pulpy tone of the series. (MAT) 7

Runaways 3

by Vaughan & Alphona + Yeung

<-> Chase finds lasers on the Leapfrog, starting a confrontation with Excelsior and then ensuring the Runaways can slip away with Victor. Brian K Vaughan writes an amusing fight between two under-prepared teams and ups the tension with the freaky hints as to Victor's super-villain father's identity. I'm unconvinced and dismayed by some of the dialogue – such as Karolina compli-menting her opponent on how pretty she is rather than fighting her and Chamber's condescending, offensive precursor to attacking Molly – and Adrian Alphona's art is only patchily good but overall everything's okay. (IM) 6

Secret War 4

by Bendis & Dell'otto

<=> The NY heroes fight an army of foes but as the battle turns a stranger arrives and transforms the villains into one giant bomb. It's impossible to get any sense of how the enormous battle is going for the heroes, a major failing of Brian Michael Bendis's writing, which also lacks the expected stunning plot twists. Gabriel Dell'otto's painted art is always vivid, his colours particularly dramatic and bold. (IM) 6

Shanna 3

by Cho; Marvel Knights

<=> More buxom bikini tales for your hard-earned bucks. Shanna strikes sultry poses and shows off her charming curves to good effect as the nasty dinosaurs and germ warfare continue to whittle away the surviving cast of strapping marines. An insubstantial story, with a crispy sugar coating of beautifully drawn 'good girl' art. (RN) 6

Spider-Man 13

by Hudlin & Tan + Sibal; Marvel Knights

<--> In sharp contrast to the excellent Mark Millar issues, we now get a poorly scripted and garishly drawn run that screams 'cheap fill in', except I suspect this is probably the new regular team. The artwork is truly dreadful in a 'bad Image' style, with strangely proportioned figures and flat perspectives that lack any sense of dynamic movement. Wolverine in particular looks like a circus freak. Not good at all. (RN) 3

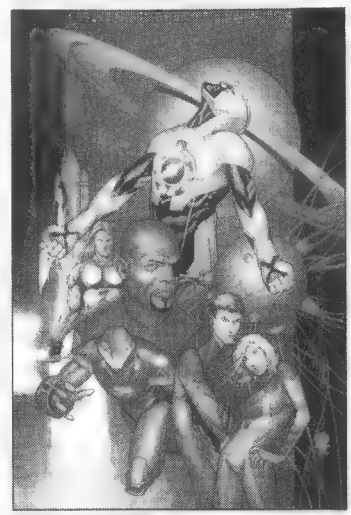
Spider-Man India 4

by various

Can Pravitr Prabhakar rescue his Aunt Maya and beloved Meera from Oberoi? The best Spider-Man book I've read in a long time, taking the better elements of the history and refining and updating it with its own twists and identities far beyond the Ultimate Spider-Man replays. Pravitr is a modestly confident young man but an uncertain new superhero; Oberoi a cross between insane Green Goblin and demonic Dormammu. The plotting is excellent, giving the book a mythic feel, but the art really dazzles, especially on the hellish action scenes. Surprisingly good. (IM) 8

Ultimate Secret 1

by Ellis & McNiven + Morales



The Kree send a robot to stop a shuttle launch, resisted by undercover agent Captain Mar-Vell. Warren Ellis's plot is insultingly absent, so thin that we get three pages just showing Mar-vell changing into his costume, and further padding through splash pages of a regular looking shuttle and a two-page explosion – neither revealing nor especially dramatic. Penciller Steve McNiven has his work cut out illustrating poor writing that offers little opportunity for artists to shine. Not impressed. (IM) 2

A decent opening issue by Ellis for his latest 'appliance of science' miniseries. Introducing the Ultimate Captain Marvel, we get a plot based around the Kree trying to thwart mankind's advance to the stars, and quite right too, because we'd be real bastards once we got a toe hold out there. Quality-wise this sits nicely with Ellis's superior output such as Planetary. (RN) 7

Spider-Man Unlimited 8

by various

<=> Another batch of creators have a stab at the Spidey franchise, creating another mixed bag in tone and style. Joe Hill and Seth Fisher go for a comical poke at fanboys, as a group of thrill-seekers cause havoc mimicking the web crawler *Jackass*-style. Fisher's detailed clear line and flair for comedy work perfectly with the gimmick of the script. Meanwhile, with Ryan Sook's suitably shadowy brush-stroke, Joshua Ortega aims to be more poignant as Spidey saves lives during an earthquake in a very mawkish post-9/11 tale. (MAT) 6

Ultimate Fantastic Four 16

by Ellis & Kubert + Dell

<+> Johnny falls ill, so the team heads home – and Annihilus wants to go with them. Warren Ellis's plot has been strung out for so long that these developments feel anti-climactic, but his script is savvy, understanding Reed's conflict between exploring and returning home to get Johnny help. Adam Kubert's pencils capture the massive size of the space station, but his freaked-out Thing looks more like a mugging comedian. A drawn out and flagging plot that merited two or three issues, not six. (IM) 5

<-> The young Reed enthusiastically makes contact with an alien inhabitant of the Negative Zone called Nihil, Johnny suffers side-effects from his superpowers and urmm… that's about it. Ellis's "decompressed" pacing really fails to work within the confines of the 32-page format, while Kubert's overly detailed art and the garish computer colouring distract from the speed at which the pages scan. Wait for the collected edition if you're still bothered; I've lost interest. (MAT) 5

Ultimate Fantastic Four 17

by Ellis & Kubert + Hanna

<-> As Nihil/Annihilus turns on them, Ben and Reed flee to the ship with Nihil in tow so it's a race to the portal home. Warren Ellis's script is improved but, really, this plot dried up long ago and holds no surprises. Adam Kubert's pencils look good but never excite and Dave Stewart's colours lack variety and nuance. A decent idea evaporated by the urge to make this a trade length adventure. (IM) 4

Ultimate Iron Man 1

by Card & Kubert + Miki

Novelist Orson Scott Card is hired to provide yet another interpretation of the tin-plated Avenger's origin story by looking back at his industrialist father and the tragic events leading up to Tony Stark's birth. Andy Kubert lends his usual slick and dynamic art to the title, although you'd be mistaken for thinking this was set "years ago" (apart from the occasional tweed skirt and the metallic cover). The pace and tone of Card's script is in keeping with the Ultimate style, but this is a pointless story to tell. (MAT) 6

Ultimates vol 2 #4

by Millar & Hitch + Neary

<+> The team discovers that Thor might be a lunatic after all, and sets out to stop him. Absolutely wonderful character writing is the strength of this comic, with Thor coming across particularly well. The usually overrated Bryan Hitch does some stunning (and subtle) work here. (KG) 8

<-> The Ultimates go after Thor for fighting riot police at a protest in Rome. Other than that, we're introduced to a European super-soldier programme that includes Captain Spain, Captain France, etc. Curiously, the Ultimate Universe version of the EU also has Norway for a member – perhaps it's a clue that things aren't as they seem. I hope this really is all a deception created by Loki, as Thor claims. (DK) 6

<-> The European Super Soldier Programme – led by Captain Britain and his father, the first glimpses of whom are anti-climactic given the cover – reveals Thor's shocking origin; but will this help the Ultimates bring in their off-message ally? Mark Millar's plotting continues to be poorly paced; fortunately the script contains cute scenes, including Cap and Wasp's age-gap problem and Hawkeye's family life. It's difficult for Hitch to bring his best work to small and uninspiring panels, until he can cut loose depicting Thor, including the best use of a splash page I've seen recently. (IM) 6

<=> While the team spends time on chat shows, the sanity of the anti-establishment Thor is called to question by a group of European superheroes. But is this merely one of Loki's tricks? Fortunately we don't really know; while other Ultimate titles have been relatively conservative in their approach, Millar is much more liberal, carving new personalities for his characters. Pushing back the release date of this series has been a godsend, allowing time for Hitch to build up his tight, detailed pencils and ensuring a more regular schedule. (MAT) 9

Ultimates vol 2 #5

by Millar & Hitch + Neary

<+++> Last issue the Ultimates were sent to take down Thor. The result isn't pretty. Mark Millar must have given a lot of thought to how the Avengers could abuse, wound and utterly humiliate Thor, and delivers a cracking expose of just how vile an apparatus Nick Fury has at his disposal in the form of his Super Soldier team. Brutal, sickening, and unmissable. (DK) 9

<-> Informed that Thor is insane, not a God, The Ultimates fight to remove his belt, the source of his powers. Bryan Hitch, superb on big widescreen splashes, struggles to impress with multiple and small panelled pages. The lengthy fight is poorly illustrated, indistinct and struggles to depict the narrative, although the final splash of Thor is impressive. Millar suddenly writing the team as inexperienced amateurs doesn't help, but Natasha's cunning and the closing sequences better reflect his talent. (IM) 5

<+> Thor faces off against his former team-mates for an all-out slugfest that rivals the Hulk battle from the first series. A jaded hack like me has seen over 30 years of superhero fights, but the combat scenes in the Ultimates always possess a dynamic edge that feels fresh and exciting. And full credit to Miller that I still haven't made my mind up whether Thor is the genuine article or just a David Icke-style conspiracy freak. (RN) 9

<=> The team confronts its crusading erstwhile member Thor, but is it being cruelly manipulated by his evil brother Loki or is he just the imagination of a demented hippie? Millar and Hitch are at a collaborative high during these widescreen blowouts. Millar's smart dialogue and Hitch's in-your-face panels prove that multi-million dollar movies can only scratch the surface of what comics can achieve in a few pages. (MAT) 9

Uncanny X-Men 455

by Claremont & Davis + Farmer

<+> The team is shocked to learn that yet another long-thought dead comrade is alive and well in Spain, while Wolverine and stowaway X-23 head for Canada. Chris Claremont uses a lengthy training session to pad out the book, and what would once have charmed readers with small character moments now feels unnecessary filler, laden with character updates irrelevant to this issue's story. Alan Davis's art is a mixed bag, with some flashes of his once-inestimable talent weighed against distorted faces and off anatomy during the training session, and it doesn't help that his clean, cheery style hasn't updated over the years and so now looks distinctly old-fashioned. (IM) 4

Uncanny X-Men 456

by Claremont & Davis + Farmer

<++> Answering Wolverine's distress call, the X-Men fight Hauk'ka (mutant human/dinosaur hybrids), who turn Rachel against them; and Psylocke realises something else is very wrong. Chris Claremont's plot is

poorly paced, with a gorgeously illustrated chapter of Psylocke's thoughts given space but the crucial fight scenes cramped, making chaotic and frustrating reading. Some of the dialogue is similarly poor, and that lush Psylocke scene aside, penciller Alan Davis rarely finds his best form. (IM) 5

Uncanny X-Men 457

by Claremont & Davis + Farmer

<+> Imprisoned and powerless, Nightcrawler and Bishop fight their way to freedom and enlist Psylocke, X-23 and their motley group of old allies and one-time enemies. Chris Claremont's writing is typically verbose, like it or not, and yet baffles by moving the needlessly complicated plot (heroes, villains... everything) from Canada to the Savage Land, seemingly without explanation. Otherwise the story is competent but mundane. Alan Davis's art is stronger but too cute for the snappier exchanges, and Dean White's colours are blunt and unsophisticated, but his work on the backgrounds is good. (IM) 4

Uncanny X-Men 458

by Claremont & Davis + Farmer

<=> Bishop and Nightcrawler lead an unlikely alliance against the Hauk'ka Saurians – and as the frenzied battle turns, the Hauk'ka unleash their secret weapon. As usual, the fearsome army that captures heroes proves incompetent for the return engagement, playing out another tired cliché. The central plot is tolerable, but needs more thoughtful execution to excite me. Alan Davis struggles again, drawing a slouching, pug-headed Bishop and generally looks simplistic while Dean White's unsubtle, inconsistent and frequently glum colours exaggerate the problem. (IM) 3

Wolverine 26

by Millar & Romita Jr + Janson; Marvel Knights

<-> SHIELD is attacked by an army of resurrected supervillains, and Wolverine is not ready to defend them. Excellent art as always from this team, but the writing feels like it's in a slump after the excitement last issue. (KG) 7

Wolverine 27

by Millar & Romita Jr + Janson

<++> As the assembled supervillains tear up the SHIELD helicarrier, they are stalked by something feral in the shadows. The concept is "Wolverine kills the villainous half of the Marvel Universe" and it works well here. Simplistic but fun plotting accompanied by great artwork. (KG) 8

X4 starring the X-Men and Fantastic Four 3

by Yoshida & Lee + Garcia + Armstrong

<+> The returning X-Men have had their powers enhanced by cosmic rays like those that gave the Fantastic Four their powers; now half-crazed, the original Fantastic Four must subdue them. That Akira Yoshida's plot took two issues to reach this set-piece fight is predictable and disappointing, but the lively battle may be worth it if big fight scenes are your major interest. Pat Lee produces his best pencils this series for the demented X-Men who look ferocious, while his Human Torch is also an impressive sight, looking genuinely dangerous aflame. (IM) 6

X4 starring the X-Men and Fantastic Four #4

by Yoshida & Lee + Garcia + Armstrong

<- -> Any lingering hope of quality vanishes with Sue, Storm and Johnny preventing a badly drawn out plane crash (what could have been adequately resolved in two pages takes ten) and the stodgy dialogue. Wolverine vs Cyclops and The Thing is a minor diversion, but it rankles that Wolverine is already more proficient using his temporary stretching powers than Reed has ever been. While Pat Lee draws a gruesomely transfigured Wolverine, the art has deteriorated every issue and fails to lure the reader in. (IM) 2

X4 starring the X-Men & Fantastic Four #5

by Yoshida & Lee + Garcia + Armstrong

<-> Fighting a Brood invasion. Thought this book couldn't get more ridiculous? The heroes easily drop this most vicious race, no hero takes an on-panel punch, yet they claim to be struggling. The 'winning' gambit is as absurd as the most ridiculous elements of this weak series. The art disintegrates, with characters frequently and unnecessarily messy, murky, unrecognisable or monstrous. How unrelentingly awful must a book be to score zero? Just three panels contain some artistic reward, so this comes unbearably close to contemptuously merit-free. (IM) 1

X-Force 6

by Liefeld + Nicieza & Liefeld

<=> The final confrontation with alien beastie The Skornn. I can't find words to sum up how horrible this book is. The plotting and conclusion make minimal sense, and when a character dies their allies are remarkably off-hand and uncaring; I know it's meant as a joke about the impermanence of comic deaths, but it's badly done. Rob Liefeld's art is as absurdly OTT as the story, but not always terrible, although the action sequences lack dynamics – Shatterstar and Helix look more like besotted ballerinas onstage than lethal opponents. (IM) 1

X-Men 168

by Milligan & Larroca + Miki

<+> The X-Men confront Boy and his fellow mutant rioters, while Golgotha's mental influence makes them snap at each other. Peter Milligan's uninspired plot is burdened with awkward dialogue but the script salvages some pride with a few jokes; unfortunately I don't read X-Men for the comedy. Salvadore Larroca's art doesn't reduce well, leaving some faces blank, but his 'transparent' Iceman always looks great despite Danny Miki's unsubtle inks. Liquid! colours are creepy, but their excellence doesn't make mediocre art good. Memo to all parties: must do better. (IM) 5

X-Men 169

by Miligan & Larroca + Miki + Martinez

<=> Golgotha, a psychic parasite, has a 24-hour feeding cycle; can an X-team who loathe each other survive quarantine while Golgotha exaggerates every fear? Peter Milligan's plotting improves, but the script is

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littered with last minute third person interventions that prevent one character killing another – which is hardly riveting stuff. And blow me, this has exactly the same ending as this month's X-Men/Fantastic Four. Milligan does write some disturbing settings, but penciller Salvadore Larroca fails to make them creepy, despite occasional flashes of a superior talent, while inker Danny Miki brutalises other scenes. (IM) 4

X-Men: Phoenix Endsong 4

by Pak & Land + Ryan

<-> Scott plans to trap the Phoenix, Emma Frost offers herself up as a host and Quentin Quire plans to foil both. I'm still smarting that Quentin is inexplicably alive, I'm yet to see the point of the Shi'ar's inclusion, but Greg Pak cutely uses three horizontal strips to show three simultaneously occurring streams of action which makes the issue flow well and the plot easier to follow. Greg Land's astonishing art, including an incredible blazing Phoenix Force, ably coloured by Justin Ponsor, is the highlight of this superhero soapy nonsense. (IM) 6

X-Men Unlimited 7

by Nelson & Larosa + Palmer; Raicht & Pagulayan + Parsons

<+++> Nightcrawler saves a blind girl from thugs and discusses prejudice with her; Kitty Pryde counsels a boy who's slowly dissipating. While Arvid Nelson's Nightcrawler tale is gentle and thoughtful, it's also tame and unsubtle and really needed a full-length issue for it to find any real depth. Mike Raicht's Kitty tale is better, showing how she has matured, and both stories echo their character's pasts without confusing new readers. Tom Palmer's inks add weight to the Nightcrawler tale, and Carlo Pagulayan pencils, drawing Kitty, show promise. Easily the best issue of this run. (IM) 7

Young Avengers 2

by Heinberg & Cheung + Dell + Morales

<+> Kang explains himself to the Avengers, while a pair of familiar young ladies breaks into the wrecked and deserted Mansion. This is a bit slow-moving, but it remains a great read, with sharp writing and wonderful art. (KG) 8

<-> Iron Lad explains to the New Avengers why he formed the team, while Cassie Lang retrieves Ant-Man's gear from the ruins of the mansion. Penciller Jim Cheung, aided by fluent inks, makes scenes of an un-armoured Iron Lad talking with Kang look epic; talk-heavy scenes are notoriously difficult to make visually compelling, but this works. The plot lacks the punch of last issue, but Allan Heinberg's sharp script illustrates the team's inexperience without making them look stupid, and enjoyably sculpts the new characters. (IM) 6

<+> Although the idea of fanboyish teenage versions of Marvel heroes is undeniably cheesy, Heinberg does the unthinkable and manages to pull the concept off, introducing a sense of fun to the proceedings. This issue he spices up the group dynamic with a couple of high-spirited female members and elaborates on Iron Lad's origins. Cheung's attractive linework does a lot to add to the light-hearted tone of the title. (MAT) 7

Young Avengers 3

by Heinberg + Chell + Dell

<+> We find out who Patriot is, we find out what the Vision's role in the team is, we find out lots of other cool stuff, then Kang turns up to wreck things. This is Marvel's biggest surprise; a really bad idea done really quite well, through a combination of strong writing, superb art and clever use of the shared universe. Brilliant. (KG) 9

<+> Cap, Iron Man and Jessica Jones learn more of the YA origins and fight The Growing Man with them. Allan Heinberg writes a natty script, but it's Jim Cheung who shines here with a dramatic Vision cameo, the best tears seen on a mainstream book and cool dramatic flourishes through The Patriot unmasking and a final page visitor. Nothing exceptional yet, but a great ride that looks to be heading places. (IM) 7

US Indies

Action Philosophers 1

by Van Lente & Dunlavey; Evil Twin

A whistle-stop tour through the lives and ideas of three major philosophers. As Monty Python proved again and again, philosophers can be funny, but this comic is a bit too dry for my tastes, putting the jokes aside for a "study guide" approach. It's good, but it's not funny enough. (KG) 6

Bear 8

by Smart; Slave Labor Graphics

<-> An all-Looshkin issue, as the psychotic cat goes on a number of adventures. Mostly hilarious, often juvenile, and only very occasionally a bit flat, this isn't the strongest issue so far, but it's a good laugh nonetheless. (KG) 7

Bigfoot 2

by Niles + Zombie & Corben; IDW

<=> More folks get massacred in the woods by the rampaging monster, finally causing suspicions amongst the authorities. Meanwhile a now-adult survivor resolves to hunt the beast down. Like much of Steve Niles' output this is fairly brainless visceral horror and perfectly suited to what Rich Corben does best. So just switch off and enjoy. (MAT) 6

Fade From Grace #4

by Benson & Amano; Beckett Comics

<=> Grace is kidnapped by enemies of Fade, who is still finding new ways of using his powers. This superb 'new superhero' tale has so much going for it: light, thoughtful plotting; the innovative script layouts; the poignant but unsentimental dramatic flourishes; and Jeff Amano's stunning artwork, which is beautifully simple on the eye but cleverly mixes colours, using both noir-ish blues, greys and blacks, punctuated by bolts of creamy but not dazzling yellows. Tired of super-heroes? Fade From Grace is the perfect antidote to those jaded feelings, a maturely written but uncynical take on heroism. Invincible for adults. (IM) 8

Gloom Cookie 23

by Valentino & Sparx; Slave Labor

<-> Each issue of Gloom Cookie features two stories unfolding in parallel. In this issue, *The Dark Queen* is amusing entertainment in which Moon Raven gets the opportunity to make herself look more ridiculous and Lyndi has trouble accepting Sarah is from another

universe. Unfortunately *Carnival Wars* is a confusing mess in which it's not at all clear just what is going on. (DK) 6

Grimjack: Killer Instinct 1

by Ostrander & Truman; IDW

Cynosure insist Grimjack and the Cadre assassinate minister Kalter, but with necromancer Sphinx behind her and no-one to trust he's soon out of his depth. John Ostrander's back-stabbing plot struggles to escape the clichéd shackles of the nightmare futuristic setting, and breathes no new life into the ruthless and violent character Grimjack. Timothy Truman's 'gritty' fantasy art fails to reflect the brutal script and is burdened by Lovern Kindierski's full-on, over-dominant colouring. It depresses me that some comics are still stuck in this hackneyed, unimaginative trough. (IM) 3

La Perdida 5

by Abel; Fantagraphics

<=> Jessica Abel brings her Mexican adventure story to a close, as Carla's attempts to discover her roots and soak up the foreign culture go disastrously and fatally wrong. Although Abel fills her story with fallible if not altogether unlikeable characters (even the main protagonist can be naive and manipulative), she manages to carry the reader along with what emerges as a swansong to youthful innocence. (MAT) 8

Little Star 1

by Watson; Oni Press

Simon works three days and has little Cassie two days, while wife Meg works fulltime; problem is, Cassie wants Mom to do everything, leaving Simon rejected and feeling guilty. Andi Watson's sterling writing is unsentimental, sharp, funny and occasionally poignant without schmaltz, a tricky balancing act for a book about Dad and daughter. His art equally impresses, including impressionist night skies and ordinary looking characters with bags under their eyes and small paunches. I'm not a parent and don't particularly like children – but I still find this thoughtful and enthralling. (IM) 8

Little Star 2

by Watson; Oni Press

<=> Andi Watson's return to the more real-world setting of the Staffordshire potteries continues his preoccupation with the every-day dramas and dilemmas of relationships. Young couple Simon and Cassie struggle with bringing up their small daughter and coming to terms with the fact that their dreams haven't been realised. Watson's delicate brushstrokes and evocative washes perfectly capture his characters' emotional states, while his scripts bring poignant drama to real-life situations. (MAT) 8

Nightmares & Fairy Tales 12

by Valentino & Chin; Slave Labour Graphics

<+> Catherine is haunted by the ghost of her husband's ex-wife and is taunted by her step-daughter, Betty. When Betty drowns, Catherine, the prime suspect, discovers the ghastly truth too late. Foo Swee Chin's black and white art suits this ghostly chiller, emphasising the spine-tingling uncertainty, but the unfashionably blurred lines and scratchy penwork won't impress everyone. Serena Valentino's unsettling plot (better than the wordy dialogue) turns Du Maurier's Rebecca and its like on their head and still shocks come the disturbing conclusion. Brrrrr. (IM) 8

UK Newsstand

Judge Dredd The Megazine 231

by various; Rebellion

<=> Popular villain P.J. Maybe returns when Judge Dredd hunts him on his home turf. Anderson opens a new case in *City of Dead*, and The Bogie Man's adventures take another absurd turn. There are three new strips featuring Devlin Waugh, Johnny Woo, and the mosquito menace Zancudo. A good Judge Dredd reprint, *A Child's Tale*, counteracts some of the badness of the other archive Dredd, *Playadays*. (DK) 7

2000 AD Progs 1432-1435

by various; Rebellion

<+> 2000 AD definitely has some good things in the offing. Judge Dredd goes underground in *Descent*. The VCs are back to train a batch of new recruits. Nikolai Dante oddly mixes James Bond and The Jungle Book. Sinister Dexter explores a new area of Downlode in *Life's a Beach*, and *American Gothic* (by Ian Edginton and Mike Collins) relocates the creatures of European folklore to the Old West. (DK) 8

UK Trades

Modesty Blaise: Bad Suki

by O'Donnell & Holdaway; Titan

<=> With this collected edition, the Modesty Blaise series reaches the late-1960s and it's amusing to read the 'flower power' story, *Bad Suki*, full of 'groovy cats' and 'hip chicks'. Bearing in mind Peter O'Donnell wasn't exactly young in 1967, his stab at capturing the spirit of the hippy movement was actually a lot better than that of Marvel and (especially) DC – as anyone who ever read early issues of the Teen Titans will certainly understand. Fabulously detailed artwork, crackingly good stories, and a British legend to boot: it really is fantastic to see these strips back in print again. (RN) 8

Small Press

Pest Control 7

by Springford; Ominous Comics
£1.00 from 2 Cawston Court
Highland Road, Bromley BR1 4AF
grantspringford@yahoo.co.uk

<+> Sebastian Dead heads off to Downing Street to have a word with the PM, while a new threat stalks the Pest Control team. This is absolutely excellent stuff, with writer/artist Grant Springford doing an amazing job on characterisation and scripting, as the more overt weirdness takes a back seat this issue. (KG) 8

Starscape volume 2 #1

by various; £2 from
SuperHeroStore Multimedia
4 Lothian Crescent
Paisley PA2 8AQ

A very strong anthology, with not a single stinker in the whole batch. Highlights are the lead story *Dead* with its gritty and spooky feel, and the reprints of Mick Anglo's Wonderman, which are absolutely hilarious. (KG) 7

www.incognitocomics.com

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Updated daily, with over 750,000 comics available from the country's fastest and funkiest comics website, plus action figures, statues and more!

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Networks

Comics news and gossip on the Internet

Compiled by Chris Rice and his team of Netmites

Rich ("Daddy") Johnston has yet to resurface from nappy duties, but his Lying in the Gutter print-only column will return!

Net notes

The Goat's back!

Younger readers (as in under 30) may not remember Valiant, the company that had its heyday in the early nineties, publishing fan-favourites like **Solar**, **Ninjak** and **Harbinger**, and fuelling enormous amounts of investment speculation.

Valiant was bought by software giant Acclaim, but was soon consumed by the downturn in comics (and Acclaim's own troubles) and vanished in the late nineties.

Acclaim finally filed for bankruptcy last year and, with the exception of Turok, Solar and Magnus, Robot Fighter who were licensed from Classic Media, the Valiant library of characters came up for sale recently.

The buyer looked to be John Taddeo, an ex-Marvel marketing manager who had been outbid by Disney in the CrossGen sale last year. But he was again beaten to the punch, this time by a group of private investors.

A further wrinkle has now been added by a group called Valiant Intellectual Properties, who applied to trademark several characters that have lapsed in trade-mark over the past few years, including Harbinger, Ninjak and Eternal Warrior. This group appears to include many ex-Valiant employees.

The reason for this story, however, is another of the series that VIP has applied for – **Quantum & Woody**. Chris Priest and Doc Bright's innovative and hilarious buddy book has been long mourned, but now may be on the verge of a comeback.

Priest talked about this online to Newsarama <newsarama.com>: *The agreement was, basically, that rights would reverent to me and Doc if Valiant didn't publish the book for a certain period of time. Obviously, that period has come and gone, but I never took any action on it, and neither did Doc, because we were busy with different things. We were also negotiating on and off with Acclaim to see if we could make a deal, so we could shop it to Marvel or to DC. My understanding was that Acclaim was willing to shop out the publishing, but wanted to hang on to the ancillary stuff.*

As everyone knows, it's all about being able to make a movie about the character, so neither Marvel nor DC was interested in just publishing.

There were other people we spoke with, and it was an ongoing process until Acclaim filed bankruptcy, and my contact stopped returning calls and e-mails.

Time kind of slipped away, and I hadn't thought about it until I became aware the assets were being auctioned off, and another entity was being formed around the trademarks. I also learned around the same time that Acclaim had let our trademarks lapse, which irritates me more than I can say.

The one thing I sort of counted on them to do was to protect the trademark, but they didn't. So now a new entity, Valiant Intellectual Properties, has approached Mark and me about this, and we're working out the details.

All I can say beyond that is that they're people who we've worked with before who've been big supporters of ***Quantum and Woody*** *previously, so we've got the established relationship, and are anxious and excited to see what their plans might be, and are optimistic we'll be able to bring* ***Quantum and Woody*** *back, intact, as they originally existed.*

We're looking into who owns the rights to the older material – us, them, or somewhere in between; but if party A owns the copy-right to the preexisting material and party B owns the trademark, and Doc and I own the rights to the characters overall – I hope we can all work together to get the trade paperbacks back into print, since there's still a demand for that stuff.

They also hope new stuff would follow which, in a market favouring a return to '90s-style storytelling, would seem likely to succeed.

Networks certainly has fond memories of the book, and will bring you more news as it develops.

David on Spidey

Fantastic Four team Mark Waid and Mike Wieringo were supposed to be jumping on to a new Spider-Man book, but there's been a change, as Peter David reveals on his PeterDavid.net: *When* ***Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man****, the new Spidey series coming from Marvel late this summer, hits the stands, it will be with a different creative team than previously announced: Mike Wieringo as artist, and yours truly as writer.*

I'm really excited about this, since it's years since I've written on ongoing Spidey title and fans have been asking when, or if, I'll ever have the opportunity again. I'm pleased to be working with Ringo, whose art I've very much enjoyed, and am grateful to editor Tom Brevoort for offering me the assignment (and Joe Q, naturally, for giving the final OK). Spidey was my very first comicbook work for Marvel, and it's great to be back.

David was the writer of the infamous *Sin Eater* storyline back in the '80s and his rehabilitation at Marvel seems to continue.

Byrne-ing Crosses

Artist John Byrne continues to out-do himself attracting controversy on his message board <www.byrnerobotics.com>. Following on from his comments on Chris Reeve and Siegel & Schuster, Byrne recently managed to cause offence yet again, during a discussion thread on the proper terminology for comics' specifics.

One of the members posted the following: *Do words have inherent meanings or just those we ascribe to them? If enough pros, in addition to the fans, say "speech bubble" then why wouldn't "bubble" be just as valid as "balloon"? JB says "balloon", someone else says "bubble", and they could both be right.*

To which Byrne replied: *There are lots of people who call Black people "niggers". Are both terms "right"?*

You seem to have missed the rather important point that my response indicated roughly the same percentage of fans and pros use the improper terms for various elements of what we do – but that percentage does not approach a balance.

It is not that roughly half say "balloon" and half say "bubble". It is that some say "bubble" and they are wrong.

Another user added: *Um, we don't avoid using the word "nigger" because it's incorrect usage. We avoid using it because it's incredibly racist and hateful. Is there an ethnic group that's impugned when someone says "thought bubbles" instead of "thought balloons"?*

Byrne's response: *"Um..." in point of fact there are plenty of people who use the word "nigger" because that is the word they use, not because they imagine it has any negative racial connotations. That's precisely why I chose that word.*

"There are lots of people who call Black people 'niggers'. Are both terms 'right'?" ...John Byrne

One of the regular board members popped up at this point: *Enough already with the casual tossing around of racist epithets! John, you cannot possibly be that ignorant to believe people who use racial slurs do so without any negative intent or connotation.*

If you do indeed believe that, I strongly encourage you to seek counsel and educate yourself on the matter.

I've only been black and lived in this country for, oh, my entire life, so I may not be aware of how things really are out there...

We spend an awful lot of time on this board dealing with the issue of respect, as it pertains to comicbook characters, comicbook terminology, reverence for creators' original visions, nicknames for comicbook characters, etc. People tread lightly on eggshells out of fear of upsetting you and your many rules for how seriously this wonderful hobby of ours should be taken. How about we extend that same measure of respect to the people who participate in this board?

We're supposed to take your word for how things should be in the industry, how characters are supposed to be treated, etc because of your years of experience. How about you extend me the same courtesy on this issue? There were an infinite number of comparatives you could have used to illustrate your point about correct comicbook terminology. The fact you chose the one you did... why?

I think we get your point. They're balloons, not bubbles. Fine. Your comparative example sucked. Just as you ask us not to use terms that bother, offend or piss you off, I'm asking you publicly to not use racially insensitive terms and epithets on the board as well. Or is that something you have a problem with?

Byrne kept on going: *Ignorance is the key, but not on my part. There are many places in this country where people to this day use "nigger" when referring to Black people because that's the word they use. They don't think of it as a racial slur. They don't think about it at all, in fact. It simply is.*

This is not even considering Black people who themselves use the word. We cannot, surely, imagine that it is used in that context as a racial slur? "Nigger" is a word – like so many others – with a complex etymology and an even more complex pattern of use.

Unbelievably, this went on for four more pages.

So having alienated only comics fans previously, it appears Byrne is now oblivious to the fact he's blindly offending millions, including, once more, many of his loyal fans. Amazing.

Chris Bunting's COMICS WEBWORLD

The internet truly is a level playfield where the barrier between star and fan is not only blurred but broken. Essentially anybody can be a star here as the Net is a perfectly justified tool for shameless self-promotion. Comic pros and fans alike are in on the act via blogs, websites, and networking (in the old-fashioned sense of the word!). Not one to be left out, here's my own selection of shameless self-promoting ...

ACTION MAN COMIC **www.paninicomics.co.uk**

I've been writing for this comic based on the British action figure for a while now and I still feel it's an honour and a privilege – and fantastic fun – to be involved. For US readers, Action Man is literally the British counterpart of G.I. Joe. But whereas the Joe figure shrank in size, AM stayed tall, and has remained so to this day, where he and Action Force have to battle the evil Dr X. Check it out every three weeks in newsagents.

MR.T COMIC **www.apcomics.com/mrtpage.htm**

The man with the gold is back, and from a British publisher, APComics! I'm writing this all-new monthly featuring the Mohawk-haired muscle-bound legend. With Mr.T himself as creative supervisor, the first issue hits the shops this month (May).

ANTARCTIC PRESS **www.antarctic-press.com**

Home of my first pro writing in 2003's **Shoujo** #4, but I now have two projects on the way from this mega-popular American manga publisher. One will be a rather unusual comic, drawn by fellow Brit, Kit "**Wonderland**" Wallis, while the other is a collision of two genres in **Pirate Queen**, drawn by my frequent collaborator, Jeff Borneman.

THE LEXIAN CHRONICLES **www.apcomics.com**

Based on the novel of the same name, this is a very rich, vivid, character-driven fantasy story. It's fascinating adapting it into an entirely new medium, made all the more enjoyable by working with the new (Spanish) art team of Inaki Miranda and Eva de la Cruz. The story centres around Reena and the Phoenix tribe, with healthy doses of action, adventure, humour ... and mystery.

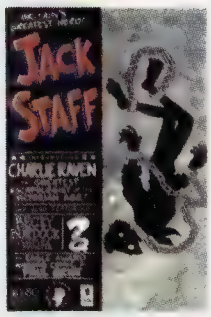
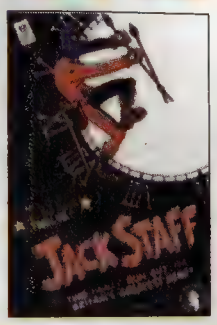
ACCENT UK: **www.accentukpress.co.uk**

Accent UK is an ambitious British publisher, essentially a collective of small publishers all working in harmony. I've already contributed stories to two of their anthologies, with my latest – in which I'm joined by Marvel and DC artist Rebecca Woods – due to appear in the comic book re-imagining of the labours of Hercules: **Twelve**.

Honourable mentions: My personal website [**www.writing.me.uk**] & We've Got the Mr.T comic book site [**http://mrtcomic.weve-got.com/**]

FLAG WAVING

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF JACK STAFF BRITAIN'S GREATEST HERO!



I KNOW THIS PAGE LOOKS SORT OF ANORAKY IN A STAMP COLLECTOR KIND OF WAY. BUT DON'T YOU JUST LOVE GAZING AT COMICBOOK COVERS? THEY'RE OFTEN THE BEST PART OF THE WHOLE BOOK, ESPECIALLY THOSE CLASSIC OLD ONES.

BUT ***JACK STAFF*** ISN'T AN OLD ONE. AND YOU DON'T JUST GET FANTASTIC COVER ART AND DESIGN, YOU GET THE SAME GUY ON THE INSIDE, BOTH WRITING AND DRAWING IT!

PAUL GRIST BUILT HIS REP THROUGH SUCH SELF-PUBLISHED TITLES AS ***BURGLAR BILL*** (ON AND OFF SINCE 1986) AND ***KANE*** (31 ISSUES, 1993-2001), PLUS WORK WITH GRANT MORRISON (***ST SWITHIN'S DAY***, 1990 - ADVERTISED ON THE BACK COVER OF ***COMICS INTERNATIONAL*** #1!) AND EDDIE CAMPBELL (***LUCIFER***, 1990).

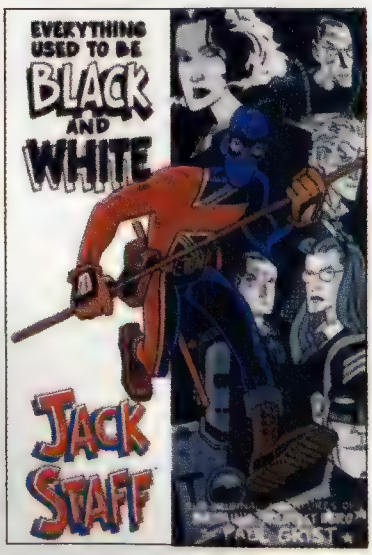
NOW A WELL-ESTABLISHED INDIE COMICS CREATOR, HE'S ALSO DABBLED WITH THE MAJORS, MARVEL AND DC, AND EVEN DRAWN A 5-PART ***GRENDEL TALES*** MINI FOR DARK HORSE.

WEBMASTER GUIDO WEISSHAHN ≤WWW.WEISSHAHN.DE/KANE/INDEX.HTML≥ SAID OF HIS ***KANE*** TITLE: *THE BEST CONTEMPORARY CRIME FICTION IN THE COMICS MEDIUM (AND YES, I KNOW HOW HARD BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS TRIES, BUT EVEN SO. . . IT'S STILL IN ANOTHER LEAGUE).*

HOWEVER GRIST'S TOUR DE FORCE HAS TO BE ***JACK STAFF***, HIS HOMAGE TO THE DAYS OF CLASSIC BRITISH COMICS, FRONTED BY THE SUPERHERO WE NEVER HAD. DRAWN IN HIS ALEX TOTH MEETS WILL EISNER, MIKE MIGNOLA AND JAIME HERNANDEZ STYLE, ITS STORYTELLING IS EVOCATIVE OF A TIME LONG GONE WHILE STILL MAINTAINING 21ST CENTURY SENSIBILITIES.

DON'T WORRY IF YOU'RE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE BACK STORY, YOU DON'T NEED TO BE. SIMPLY LAUNCH YOURSELF INTO THIS, THE FIRST EPISODE OF A BRAND-NEW 12 PART SERIAL WHICH WILL UNFOLD ACROSS THE NEXT YEAR'S WORTH OF ***COMICS INTERNATIONAL***.

. . . DEZ SKINN



The two big covers above, centre, are for the collections of Jack Staff, published by Image. Seek them out to read what went before or hold on a month and wait for our announcement. By then we should have stocks in house so you can buy direct from Quality Communications.

STARTS TODAY! A GREAT NEW SERIAL FROM THE PAGES OF JACK STAFF – BRITAIN'S GREATEST HERO!

THIS IS BEN KULMER.
IT'S NOT HIS REAL NAME.
HE USED TO BE CALLED KARL STRINGER.
HE USED TO BE KNOWN AS THE CLAW.
HE USED TO BE A THIEF.
OLD HABITS.

DANGER OF DEATH
KEEPOUT
DANGER
BZZZT
Here we go. Again.

I'm supposed to be one of the good guys.
So WHY am I doing THIS?
I guess I don't like being told what to do.
THIS is what I do.
I set the rules.
It's not like I'm looking for money, y'know?
I just want some thing to show I was here. That's all.
Something small.
Easy to carry.
It'll do.
CLICK!
ALRIGHT Y'BUGGER! I KNOW WHAT Y'R UP TO ...
YOU TOUCH ANY THING ...
AN' I'LL BLOW Y'R HEAD OFF Y'R SHOULDERS Y'HEAR?
NO ONE GETS THE BETTER OF SOMMERSET STONE!

WILL IT BE MORE THAN JUST OLD HABITS WHICH DIE HARD? DON'T MISS NEXT MONTH'S EPISODE, CHUMS!

Letters

CI, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (editorial@comicsinternational.com)

John Raymond Brosnan, 1947-2005

HE WAS never really very well known to the comics fraternity at large. His only direct contribution had been a rejected movie script converted to a trilogy of strips for **2000 AD**. But John Brosnan, the recently deceased author of the SF weekly's *Night Zero/Beyond Zero/Below Zero* serials (1988, prog 607 onwards), played a pivotal role a decade earlier when, along with several other foolhardy friends of mine, he let me borrow £500 for a few weeks towards the print deposit for launching my first solo publication, the somewhat expensive 72,000 print run **Starburst** #1. He was also the first genuine author I knew.

A fanatical film buff and special effects maven, John had arrived in London from his native Perth, Australia in 1970 (travelling by double decker bus, no less) and by the time I met him in 1975 he already had two books to his name, **James Bond in the Cinema** (1972) and **Movie Magic** (1974) with **The Horror People** soon following. These made him absolutely impossible to sit next to in screenings, with him constantly pointing out glass shots and back projection at tense moments. But I had my revenge. From the lofty world of hardbacks, I reduced him to a mere special effects columnist in **Monster Mag**, a lurid poster magazine which acted as a catalyst for the birth of **House of Hammer**.

Coupled with my yearning to produce comics, it had been the quality (and quantity!) of John's work, alongside that of Taisto Vahimagi and Tony Crawley which led to me needing more space than the 8-page back of a poster could accomodate. When the horror film magazine begat its aforementioned standalone science fiction sibling, John jumped on board, and perhaps became best known within the genre for his cynical *It's Only a Movie* column (named in part after a superb Roger Chapman/Family album of the time).

He went on to write or co-write over 20 novels (several under his equally cynical pseudonym of HAK – Harry Adam Knight), with the screen adaptation of one giving Liz Hurley her first major role (1992's **Bedlam**, filmed as *Beyond Bedlam*), but the lasting memory of John Brosnan for me is his wry and often unintentional humour.

Wry? When offered a chance to fulfill an ambition by submitting a BBC Doctor Who script, his plot was that the TARDIS landed in the BBC Television Centre and everybody there thought the Doctor was actually a hungoverTom Baker looking for another drink. The Corporation was not amused.

Unintentional? He was answering an Australian's request for directions to Earl's Court. "Bloody hell, you're 'Stralie too!" the backpacker announced. "No, I'm not!" John blurted out angrily. "So where y'fram?" the tourist challenged. Almost in panic, and having only just left my office, so my own roots must have been the first to spring to mind, John replied in his strangely affected almost pompous Queen's English manner, "Errrr, Yorkshire!" As the confused traveller wandered off he could be heard muttering, "Well, you sound 'Stralie t'me."

I lost contact with John years ago, a sad reality of work-related friendships dissipating when the commonality is gone. Apparently, he died alone in his London flat of acute pancreatitis on or about April 11 and was not found for several days.

Like everybody else, I have lost friends and relatives, but the knowledge of John having gone continues to haunt me. Not because he died alone, he had always been a loner. Closer friends, knowing of his failing health being exacerbated by his drinking, probably were less surprised. But with my selective memory coupled with typically Aquarian optimism, I never saw it coming. He was a contemporary who, almost despite himself, rose through the ranks from ardent SF reader to author, and I respected him. The last time John and I met was when I took a keen fan up to London's Troy Club to meet him late one evening. Somewhat in his cups, his parting comment to me was, "You shouldn't waste your time with me."

It was never a waste, John.

. . . Dez Skinn

Jack Staff

Posted to qualitycommunications.com by Pete Bangs

THIS is great news *(Letters,* **CI** #184)! **Jack Staff** may have one of the most erratic publishing schedules since **Kane** (is there a link there?) but Paul Grist's book is one of the most complex and intelligent comics available today.

Grist doesn't insult your intelligence, doesn't expect you to have an encyclopedic knowledge of UK comics, and understands heroes are heroes because they are better than us – they are prepared to put themselves between us and danger.

In a day when comics companies seem to be surrendering the concept of heroism and dragging their heroes down into the dirt and making them 'less', Paul Grist and Jack Staff are a shining light.

Panel Beaters

Mike Kazybrid via e-mail

JUST wanted to say that yet again another good idea enters the pages of **CI**. *Panel Beaters* is a wonderful way to appreciate both artwork and artist from a great period in comics history.

Defending Trident

Simon R. Green via e-mail: simon@shadowsfall.demon.co.uk

ABOUT the Jerry Cornelius piece in *Letters* #184: I don't think Trident was a complete flop. I enjoyed the hell out of **The Saga of the Man-Elf**, and Mark Millar's **Saviour** (recently reworked). And Eddie Campbell gave us a really good run of Bacchus stories.

Praising Charlton

John D. Hall via e-mail

IN LINE with recent reminiscences about childhood comics buying, here is my own story, brought to mind by the recent tragic demise of Blue Beetle in **Countdown To Infinite Crisis**.

As a boy I had a fantastic collection of early Marvel and Silver Age DC comics, Tower and Mighty Comics, even a few Gold Key, but the pride of place went to the relatively few Charlton Comics I had picked up under their brief expansion under Dick Giordano. Steve Ditko was then one of their major talents. He had revamped Captain Atom and the Blue Beetle, and introduced the Question and Nightshade among others, and he was then at the height of his storytelling ability.

At the age of 14 I decided to put all this behind me and sold off my collection for a pittance. It was only 1968, the serious collector mentality had not yet taken hold. These books had no worth to my mind beyond their reading value. A familiar story, I'm sure.

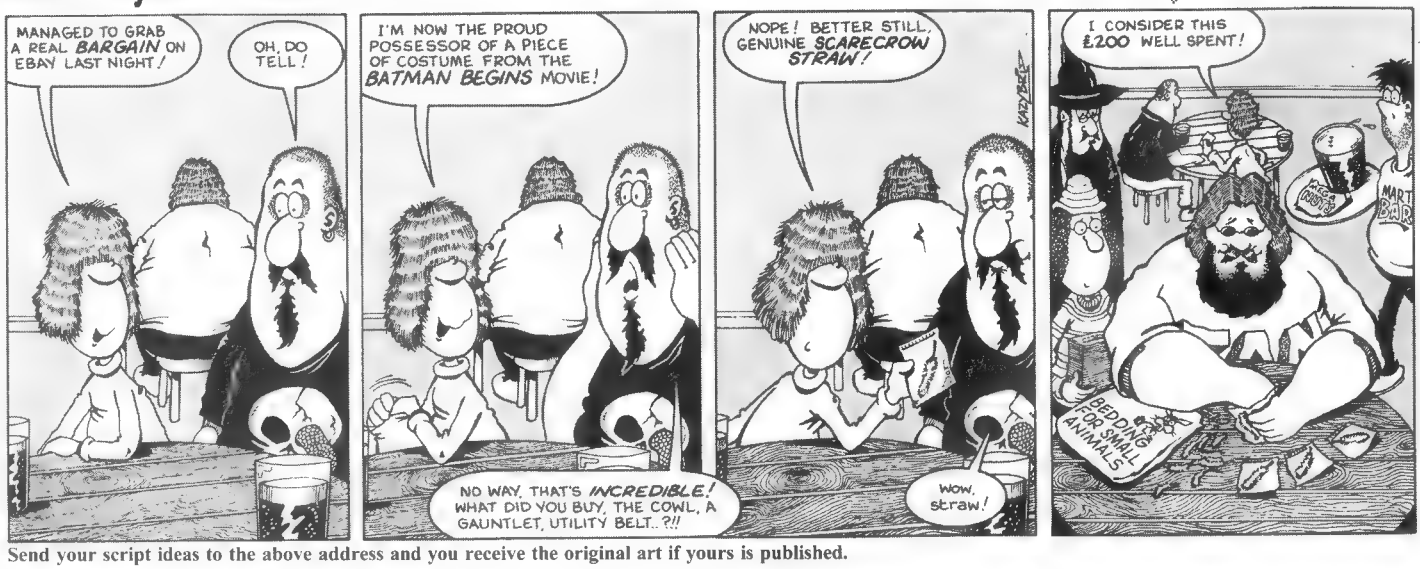
Three years later, I was walking through Leeds Market and strolled past Stringer's bookstall, where in the past I had picked up many lost jewels, including a secondhand copy of **Police Comics** featuring both the Spirit and Plastic Man, now sold along with the rest for one old penny per.

I saw the usual stack of old comics and, on this particular day, decided to rifle through for nostalgia's sake without the slightest intention of actually buying anything. However I came across the Charlton **Blue Beetle** #1. **Blue Beetle** had been my favourite comic, and the series which had debuted in the back pages of **Captain Atom** had only lasted about six issues before Charlton imploded. I had had, and discarded, the other issues, but I had never bought #1. And there it now was in front of me.

After a bit of wrestling with my conscience because this was a hobby I had put firmly behind me, I picked it up and bought it and from that moment had a new comics collection of one copy.

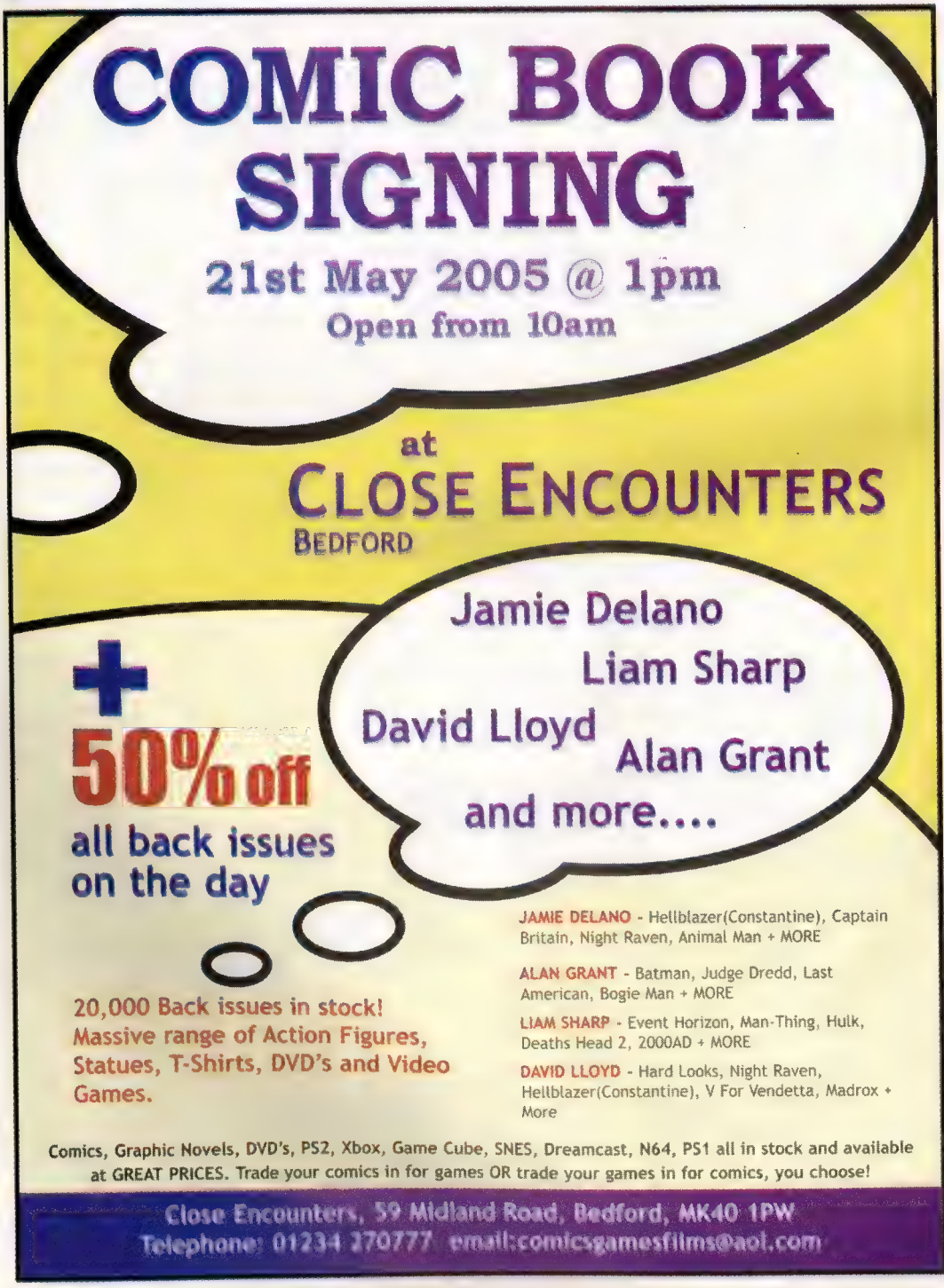
A year or two later Jack Kirby burst onto the scene over at DC, and I started picking up some more comics, new ones this time. By the

Mike Kazybrid's COMIC CUTS


MANAGED TO GRAB A REAL BARGAIN ON EBAY LAST NIGHT!
OH, DO TELL!
I'M NOW THE PROUD POSSESSOR OF A PIECE OF COSTUME FROM THE BATMAN BEGINS MOVIE!
NO WAY, THAT'S INCREDIBLE! WHAT DID YOU BUY, THE COWL, A GAUNTLET, UTILITY BELT..?!!
NOPE! BETTER STILL, GENUINE SCARECROW STRAW!
KAZYBRID
WOW, straw!
I CONSIDER THIS £200 WELL SPENT!
BEDDING FOR SMALL ANIMALS
MART BAR

Send your script ideas to the above address and you receive the original art if yours is published.

Please note: All scripts are submitted on the understanding they become the copyright property of Kazybrid, Skinn and Comics International.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Close Encounters, 59 Midland Road, Bedford, MK40 1PW
Telephone: 01234 270777 email:comicsgamesfilms@aol.com

time I was 19 the habit had firmly taken hold again, but I would maintain that the first issue of **Blue Beetle** fiendishly inserted in an innocent stack of secondhand comics in a Leeds market bookstall had led to my downfall.

I followed the character over to his lacklustre incarnation at DC along with the other Charlton characters that were never done justice. I read **Watchmen**, of course, which was based on them and should have featured them rather than replicas because none of these imported licenses can ever have earned much for DC. They should have gone down in a blaze of glory in 1987 as the Watchmen.

Now Blue Beetle, subsidiary joke character as he became, has gone down in a blaze of glory. In a story that acknowledged his status as an overlooked and derided hero, he set out alone to discover the threat that the other heroes had overlooked and died trying to get back with the warning. Not exactly what I was expecting when I picked up this low-priced intro to the **Infinite Crisis** series.

Thank you, DC, for finally bringing some dignity back to my old time favourite comicbook character. Ted Kord, RIP.

By the way, I also like what you are doing with the Question.

England's glory?

Keith A Cunningham via e-mail

IF DC care about anything more than making a quick buck by cashing in on all of our brilliant old British stuff: (a) Why give **Albion** to an artist no one's ever heard of? Is he cheap? (b) Why is Dave Gibbons being allowed to do covers that mean bugger all to 99.999% of comics fans and are dull, dull dull? (c) How on earth did Leah Moore and John Reppion get such a gig writing a comic about characters they'd probably never heard of, let alone care about? Their **Wild Girl** title's piss poor, but Daddy didn't plot that one.

Come on, Keith, give them a chance. Lots of characters have been redefined by people younger than the creations. Why not read it and then let us know what you think? The first published stuff written by "Daddy" probably wasn't that good either.

*On the art front, nobody really knew Barry Windsor-Smith's work when he took on **Conan**, and as for covers, Dave Gibbons' **Watchmen** ones were pretty obscure too, but that didn't seem to hurt!*

Forced humour

Justin Moseley via e-mail

SORRY to moan, but I thought the *Batman Begins* article in **CI** #184 was awful!

From the forced humour to the "amusing" picture captions, the whole style of the article seemed totally out of place compared to the rest of the magazine, which is primarily news-based and about comics and related media.

Just my two pence worth!

Directory

An at-a-glance reference guide to everything that counts in comics

Internet Listings

Comics creators

Jessica Abel ..... www.artbabe.com
Neal Adams ..... www.nealadams.com
Kyle Baker ..... www.kylebaker.com
Leo Baxendale ..... www.reaper.co.uk/main.htm
Brian Bolland Art ..... www.velouria.com/Bolland
Mark Bright ..... www.mdbright.com
Eddie Campbell ..... www.eddiecampbellcomics.com
John Cassaday ..... www.johncassaday.com
Gene Colan ..... www.genecolan.com
Chuck Dixon ..... www.dixonverse.com
Will Eisner ..... www.willeisner.tripod.com
Warren Ellis ..... www.warrenellis.com
Phil Foglio ..... www.studiofoglio.com
Jon Haward ..... www.jonhawardart.com
Jeff Jones ..... www.jeffreyjones.com
Bob Layton ..... www.boblayton.com
Joseph Michael Linsner ..... www.linsner.com
Tom Lyle ..... www.tomlyle.com
Scott McCloud ..... www.scottmcloud.com
Grant Morrison ..... www.grant-morrison.com
Alex Ross Art ..... www.alexrossart.com
Dave Stevens ..... www.davestevens.com
William Stout ..... www.williamstout.com
Bryan Talbot ..... www.bryan-talbot.com
Barry Windsor-Smith .. www.barrywindsor-smith.com
Bernie Wrightson ..... www.berniewrightson.com

Comics publishers

Abstract Studios ..... www.strangersinparadise.com
AC Comics ..... www.accomics.com
Acclaim ..... ww.acclaim.com/comics
AiT/Planet Lar ..... www.astronautsintrouble.com
Antarctic Press ..... www.antarctic-press.com
AP Comics ..... www.apcomics.com
Archie Comic Publications ... www.archiecomics.com
Caliber Comics ..... www.calibercomics.com
Cartoon Books ..... www.boneville.com
Chaos! ..... www.chaoscomics.com
com.x ..... www.comxcomics.com
CrossGen ..... www.crossgen.com
Crusade Entertainment ..... www.shiweb.com
Dark Horse ..... www.darkhorse.com
DC Comics ..... www.dccomics.com
Devil's Due Publishing ..... www.devilsdue.net
Drawn and Quarterly ..... www.drawnandquarterly.com
Dynamic Forces ..... www.dynamicforces.com
Fantagraphics ..... www.fantagraphics.com
Harris Comics ..... www.vampirella.com
Heavy Metal ..... www.heavymetal.com
Knockabout Comics ..... www.knockabout.com
Marvel Comics ..... www.marvel.com
Northern Lightz ..... www.northernlightz.com
Oni Press ..... www.onipress.com
Pulp Theatre ..... www.pulptheatre.com
Quality/Warrior ..... www.comicsinternational.com
Sirius Entertainment www.sirius.choiceoneonline.com
Todd McFarlane Productions ..... www.spawn.com
Top Cow Comics ..... www.topcow.com
TwoMorrows ..... www.twomorrows.com
2000 AD www.2000ADonline.com
Viz (USA) ..... www.viz.com
Viz (UK) ..... www.viz.co.uk
WildStorm Comics ..... www.wildstorm.com

Manga and anime

AD Vision ..... www.advfilms.com
MVM ..... www.mvm-uk.co.uk

OTAKU.CO.UK
Secure online shopping for the latest anime, manga and game collectables direct from Japan ..... www.otaku.co.uk

Downloadable software

PANELSYS
Comprehensive comic cataloguing software available for only £4.99. Download a free trial today or buy online ..... www.panelsys.com

On-line auctions

COMIC BOOK POSTAL AUCTIONS
Ten successful years specialising in Golden & Silver Age, artwork and vintage UK comics ..... www.compalcomics.com

eBay ..... www.ebay.co.uk
Heritage Comics Auctions . www.heritagecomics.com

Fantasy art and books

THE DRAGONS GALLERY
'Shop online' for original comic art, lithos, manga, fantasy and gothic art ..... www.thedragonsgallery.co.uk

New and back issue dealers

Ace Comics ..... www.acecomics.net

COLMORE COMICS
Quality Silver Age and Bronze Age on the UK's newest state-of-the-art website! ..... www.colmorecomics.com

COMIC BIZ
"Britain's favourite comicbook company" Over 250,000 items for sale ..... www.comic-biz.com

COMIC CAVE
Advance imports and Previews merch. Up to 25% discount. Shop in Sheffield. Free delivery ..... www.comiccave.co.uk

Comics Forever ..... www.comicsforever.com

COMIX-SHOP.CO.UK
Hot comics, new imports, fast service, nice prices... Go on, take a peek ..... www.comix-shop.co.uk

86TH FLOOR COMICS
Advance import comics and merchandise. Comprehensive, easy-to-use monthly catalogues! www.86thfloor.com

EPIC HEROES
Comics, toys, DVDS, posters, games, CCG. All available to order online. Next day delivery ..... www.epicheroes.com

GOLDUST COMICS
Fantastic range of Golden, Silver and Bronze Age comics on our easy-to-use website ..... www.goldustcomics.com

INCOGNITO
Access over 500,000 comics on the UK's fastest and funkiest comics website ..... www.incognitocomics.co.uk

Krypton Komics ..... www.kryptonkomics.com

MEGA-CITY COMICS
Largest graphic novel catalogue in the country – fast and easy online shopping ..... www.megacitycomics.co.uk

Mighty World of Comicana ..... www.comicana.com
OK Comics ..... www.okcomics.co.uk
Page 45 ..... www.page45.com

QUICKSILVER COMICS
The specialist Silver and Bronze Age site. Over 100,000 items listed, all with cover images ..... www.qscomics.com

SILVER ACRE COMICS
Over 900,000 comics in stock, 110,000 different items listed online ..... www.silveracre.com

30th CENTURY COMICS
Golden Age, comprehensive Silver and Bronze Age and 15,000 British comics all listed www.30thcenturycomics.co.uk

On-line comics companies:

By popular demand, **Comics International** now runs an at-a-glance overview of the major sites for on-line comics collectors and creators. Have your company listed for only £5 (US $8) a month. Bookable in six-issue blocks, companies wishing to be included should send £30 or US $40 (UK: please add £5.25 to cover VAT) with trading name and website address.

♦ Major companies requiring bold and boxed entries should send £60 + £10.50 VAT per six-issue series, US $80 (£10/$16 per issue) and may add three lines of descriptive copy. Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International and sent to:
Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ
Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail details to: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

Retail Index: UK

Key to the abbreviations used:

imp = air imported new issues
back = back issues stocked
gn = graphic novels
tpbk = trade paperbacks
STO = standing order service (new comics reserved)
s-p = small press and fanzines
ind = independent comics
u/g = underground comix
prl = peripherals/supplies
RPG = role playing games
CCG = customisable card games
merch = trading cards, videos, t-shirts, posters, etc

Sorry, no websites, this is a shop guide

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Central London

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11 5QJ. Mon-Thurs 10-5.45; Fri 10-6.30; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-3.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 020 7924 3609

Book & Comic Exchange, 14 Pembridge Road, Notting Hill Gate, London W11. Mon-Sun 10-8. Nothing legal refused! (back, ind, u/g) 020 7229 8420

Comic Showcase 63 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0NE. Sun-Wed 10-7; Thurs-Fri 10-8; Sat 9.30-8 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, cartoon books, original art) 020 7434 4349

Forbidden Planet Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR. Mon-Wed 10-7; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-7; Sun 12-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, sci-fi/fantasy, books, video/DVD, games, mags, toys) 020 7420 3666

Gosh!, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (opposite British Museum). Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat-Sun 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, foreign, largest range newspaper strip compilations in UK) 020 7636 1011

Mega-City Comics, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat-Sun 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV, fantasy/horror, body art, subculture) 020 7485 9320

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftsbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EH. Mon-Wed 10.30-6.30; Thurs-Sat 10-7; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV/fantasy) 020 7836 5630

Orbital, 148 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0LB. Mon-Sat 10.30-7; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, manga, toys, Transformers) 020 7240 7672

Outer London

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, prl, merch, sci-fi, original art) 020 8686 2400

Atomic Comics, 1112 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Tues 10.30-5.30; Wed 1-5.30; Thurs-Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, art books, Games Workshop, toys, kits) 020 8597 8547

Calamity Comics, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV, books, videos) 020 8427 3831

Cosmic Legacy, 7 Shrubbery Road, Streatham, London SW16 2AS. Mon-Sat 10-6; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, ind, merch) 020 8696 9428

Epic Heroes, 21/23 Station Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7JE. Mon-Sat 10-6. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, toys, posters, Transformers) 020 8952 7181

Forbidden Planet, 175 North End, Croydon CR0 1TP. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-6. (back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch) 020 8688 7190

Krypton Komics, 252 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ (next to Tesco) Tues-Wed 11-6; Thurs 10.30-7; Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 Nearest Tube: Seven Sisters Road. (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind) 020 8801 5378 fax: 8376 3174

Piranha, 3 Zurich House, 299 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LG. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri-Sat 10-6; Sun 11-3 (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, prl) 020 8915 0858

They Walk Among Us, 26 Red Lion Street, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RW. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-6; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, fantasy/sci-fi horror, subculture) tel/fax: 020 8948 8476

30th Century Comics, 18 Lower Richmond Road, London SW15 1JP. Mon-Wed 10.30-6; Thurs-Fri 10.30-7; Sat 10.30-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, Gold/Silver/Bronze Age specialists, British comics/annuals, books) 020 8788 2052

South East

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch) 01206 561912

The American Comic Shop, 1 Church Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BS (off High Street). Mon-Fri 10-5.30 (Tues until 5); Sat 9-5.30. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, action figures) 01634 817410

Calamity Comics, 162 High Street, Watford WD17 2EG. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 01923 249293

Cartoon Shop, 19 East Square, Basildon, Essex SS14 1HT. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01268 534194

Central City Comics, 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, foreign) 01473 233017

Comic Showcase, 19-20 St Clements Street, Oxford OX4 1AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01865 723680

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1JN. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, tpbk, gn, merch, CCG, toys) 01628 777998

David's Comic Shop, 5 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 4EN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.45; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g) 01273 691012

Forbidden Planet, 60 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch, videos, sci-fi/fantasy books, film/TV magazines) 01223 301666

Forbidden Planet, 44 The Priory Centre, Dartford, Kent DA1 2HS. Mon-Wed 10.30-5.30; Thurs-Sat 10-5.30 (back, gn, ind, PRG, CCG, merch) 01322 224837

Incognito Comic Shop, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton LU1 2TP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, STO, s-p, CCG, merch, Star Trek/Wars, sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Planet Ace, 324-325 Chartwell North, Top Floor, Victoria Plaza, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5SR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 01702 613021

Slough Computers, 50 Village Shopping Centre, Slough, Berks SL1 1HP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, STO, ind, cards, second hand video games) 01753 521594

Time Trek, 46 High Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1EG. Mon-Wed/Fri 9.30-5.30; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-5.30; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, STO, CCG, prl, sf TV/film) 020 8313 0677

Whatever Comics, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, kits) 01227 453226

Whatever Comics, 5 Middle Row, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1TF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, model kits) 01622 681041

Midlands

Abstract Sprocket, 29 St Benedicts Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4PF. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01603 624410

Close Encounters, 59 Midland Road, Bedford MK10 1PW. Mon-Fri 10-6; Sat 9-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, merch, video, DVDs, action figures, t-shirts, trading cards) 01234 270777

Comic Culture, The Mall, 257-259 High Street, Lincoln LN2 1HX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, RPG, CCG, prl) 01522 546611

Forbidden Planet, 31 Cross Cheaping, Coventry CV1 1HF. Mon-Wed 9.30-6; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV) 02476 229672

Forbidden Planet Superstore, 38 Priory Queensway, Birmingham B4 7LA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs-Fri to 6) (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, books, games, mags, kits, toys, videos) 0121 236 3026

FPI Derby, 1/2 The Corn Exchange, Albert Street, Derby DE1 2DS. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, merch, rock/film TV memorabilia, video games) 01332 206606

FPI Hanley, 52 Stafford Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1JB. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01782 279294 fax: 202381

FPI Leicester, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0116 2515266

FPI Nottingham, 19-23 Friar Lane, Nottingham NG1 6DA. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 0115 9484122

FPI Wolverhampton, 23 Victoria Street, Wolverhampton WV1 3NP. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01902 717440

Ground Zero, 9 Toothill Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 1NJ. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, prl, CCG, merch, toys) 01623 622017

Nostalgia & Comics (FPI), 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon-Thurs 9.15-5.45; Fri-Sat 9.15-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0121 643 0143

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. Mon-Sat 9-6. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, manga) 0115 950 8045

Phoenix Comix, 29 Abington Square, Northampton NN1 4AE. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, RPG, CCG, action figures) 01604 602311

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 6 East Street, Derby DE1. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, fantasy books, film/TV) 0115 950 9231

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 16 Angel Row, Nottingham NG1 6HL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, miniatures) 0115 950 9231

North West

All-American, 102 Newport Street, Bolton BL3 6AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, Star Wars, WWF, action figures, S/Age, videos, records, CDs) 01204 366553

Alpha Omega Comics, 33-35 Library Street, Wigan, Lancs WN1 1NN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, merch, videos) 07796 854644

Batcave, 39 Penny Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 6HQ. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, RPG, CCG, merch) 01254 667488

Forbidden Planet, 92 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, sci-fi horror) 0151 707 1491

Forbidden Planet Megastore (FPI), 65 Oldham Street, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1JR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (two floors; imp, back, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, books, toys, film and TV tie-ins, manga) 0161 839 4777

Imagination Station, 41 Bank Street, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 8HJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch)

Millennium Comics, 4 Church Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5NT. Mon-Tues 10-5; Thurs-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01606 49255

Thunderbooks, 332 Lytham Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY4 1DW. Mon/Tues/Thurs-Sat (Sundays in June-Oct only) 10-5.30; Wed 1-3.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, media collectors' items) 01253 348321 fax: 407813

Thunderbooks II, 116 Friargate, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9EE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01772 204287

Time Tunnel, 13 Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 2BS. Mon and Wed-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, merch, film/TV memorabilia, action figures, videos, model kits) 01270 215496

Travelling Man, 4 Dale Street, Manchester M1 1JW. (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, prl) 0161 237 1877

Worlds Apart (FPI), 58-60 Lime Street (city centre), Liverpool. Mon-Sat 10-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film) 0151 707 0839

North East

Books 'N' Comics, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, fantasy and film magazines, Doctor Who/Star Trek) 01642 249143

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 30 Eastgate, The Headrow, Leeds LS2 7JL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, film/TV mags, posters, toys, kits, trading cards, stills, Star Trek/Doctor Who) 0113 242 6325

Forbidden Planet, 59 Grainger Street, Newcastle NE1 5JE. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, fantasy/sci-fi books, videos) 0191 261 9173

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 41 Dundas Street, Middlesbrough TS1 1HR. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, gn, s-p, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, video, action figures, film/TV, manga) 01642 248889

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Matilda Street, off the Moor, Sheffield S1 4QD. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Wed-Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, model kits, sci-fi/fantasy books, horror magazines, newspaper strip books) 0114 276 9475

The Last Picture Show, 38-39 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thurs 10-8; Fri 10-9; Sat 9-7, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV and rock memorabilia) 0114 256 9604 fax: 255 3399

Millennium Comics, Stall 141, Warrington Indoor Market. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01925 575657

Off-World Comics, 200 Park View, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3QP. Mon-Tues/Thurs 10-5.30 (closed Wed); Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch) 0191 251 2288

OK Comics, 19 Thorntons Arcade, Briggate, Leeds LS1 6LQ. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl) 01132 469366

Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield. Mon-Tues/Thurs-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, Star Trek specialists) 0114 275 8905

Travelling Man, Unit 8/9, The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BR. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 0113 242 7227

Travelling Man, 43 Grainger Street, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE1 5JE. (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, prl) 0191 261 4993

Travelling Man, 54 Goodramgate, York YO1 2LF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 01904 628787

2Tone Comics, 40 Market Street, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 6AA. Thurs-Sun 10.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, merch, CGC) 01422 845666

West Country

American Dream Comics, 72 Walcot Street, Bath BA1 5BD. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp. back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, hobby kits, CDs) 01225 424881

American Graffiti, 78 Church Lane, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 1BH. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01271 325740

MOVED **Area 51**, 230 Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 8NZ. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, original art) 0117 924 4655

Automattic Comics, Unit 2, 17 Pickwick Road, Corsham SN13 9BQ. Mon-Tues 12-5; Thurs-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01249 701647

Collector's Choice, 45 Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1TX. Mon-Sat 9-5 (S/Age, British comics/annuals, vintage mags, toys, memorabilia) 01452 410232

Forbidden Planet, 30 Penn Street, Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, subculture) 0117 929 8692

Forbidden Planet, 43-45 East Street, Southampton SO14 3HN. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-6; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 023 80230991 fax: 230996

Ian's Books & Comics, 195a Albert Road, Southsea, Portsmouth PO4 0JP (next to Tesco). Mon-Tues/Thurs-Fri 10.30-5.15 (Wed closed); Sat 10-5.15 (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, prl, toys) 023 92422731

Kathies Comics, Unit BG29, Broadmead Gallery, The Galleries Shopping Centre, Bristol BS1 3XB. Mon-Wed/Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Thurs 9-6; Sun 11-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0117 922 1170

Kathies Comics, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon-Fri 9.30- 5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 01752 257800

Paradox Comics, 17 High Street, Poole, Dorset BH15 1AB. Mon-Fri 10.30-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, merch, videos) 01202 661346

Travelling Man, 8 Park Street, Bristol BS1 5NF. (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, prl) 0117 925 8833

Wales

Cardiff's Comic Guru Presents!, 20-22 Wyndham Arcade, Cardiff CF10 1FJ. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-9; Fri-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 029 202 29119

Cardiff Fantasy Centre, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sat 9.30-4.30 (imp, back, STO; established over 20 years) 029 206 58184 (evenings)

Comix Shoppe, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, anime, Games Workshop) 01792 642097

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5 Duke Street, Cardiff. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri 10-5.30; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, sci-fi fantasy/ horror books, Star Trek/Wars) 029 202 28885

Negative Zone, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind; established for 12 years) 01633 222159

Scotland

Asylum Books & Games, 29 Adelphi, Aberdeen AB11 5B2. Mon 10-8; Tues-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-8; Fri-Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, new/ second hand RPG, CCG, books, original art) 01224 574637

Black Hole Comic Shop, Unit 3, 5 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1ER. Mon-Thurs 10-5; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, second hand records, CDs, videos) 01382 221037

City Centre Comics, 51 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5LU. Tues-Sat 10-5 (back) 0141 552 2208

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1JX. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 01224 622131

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 40-41 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1LL. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5. (imp, STO, s-p, ind, merch, foreign) 0131 558 8226

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 168 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0141 331 1215

Justice Comics, Unit 36, The Arcade, Stirling FK8 1AX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 01786 447687

Plan 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB25 1NE. Mon-Wed 10-5; Thurs 10-6; Fri-Sat 10-5; Sun 1-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, WWF, merch, sci-fi) tel/fax: 01224 624467

Red Hot Comics, Block D Unit 7, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH. Mon-Sat 11.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0141 630 0049

Northern Ireland

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 52-54 Ann Street, Belfast BT1 4EG Mon-Wed 9-5.30; Thurs 9-8.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 1-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 028 90438744

Planet Ace Derry, 33 Shipquat Street, Derry, Londonderry BT48 6DF. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 02871 369787

Retail Index: USA

When telephoning from outside the USA, include the bracketed 00. Out-of-town US calls begin with the 1 prefix only. The following is a fraction of the estimated 3,000+ US comics stores.

Alabama

Optic Nerve, 1930 12th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35205 (film, newsstand, ind) (00)1 205 933 2787

Alaska

Bosco's in Spenard, 2606 Spenard Road, Anchorage 99503. Mon-Sat 11-8, Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, merch) (00) 1 907 274 4112

Bosco's Diamond Centre, 800 East Diamond Boulevard, Anchorage 99577. Mon-Fri 10-9; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, games, Star Wars/Trek) (00) 1 907 344 3963

Bosco's in Eagle River, 11432 Business Boulevard, Eagle River. Mon-Sat 12-8, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, merch) (00) 1 907 696 5166

Arizona

Lost Dutchman, 747 West Camelback Road, Phoenix, AZ 85013. Mon-Sun 10-7. (new, back) (00)1 619 278 0371

California

Comickaze, 5525 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, San Diego, CA 62117-2342. Mon-Fri 11-7; Sat 11-6; Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 858 278 0371

Comix Experience, 305 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94117. Mon-Sat 11-7; Sun 12-5 (new, back) (00)1 415 863 9258

Flying Colors Comics, 2980 Treat Blvd, Concord, CA 94518. Mon-Sat 11-7 (Fri until 8); Sun 12-6 (new, back, ind, cards, merch) (00)1 510 825 5410

Lee's Comics, Inc., 1020-F N Rengstorff Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043. Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, s-p, adult, merch) (00)1 650 965 1800

Lee's Comics, Inc., 2222 South El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94403. Mon-Sun 10-9, (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, adult, s-p, merch) (00)1 650 571 1489

Meltdown Comics & Collectibles, 7522 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90046 (toys, comics, books) (00)1 323 851 7223

Stand-Up Comics, 10020 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Mon-Fri 11 7; Sat-Sun 11-6 (new, back, cards, anime, CCG, merch) (00)1 510 525 3344

Third Planet, 3822 Sepulveda Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90505. Sun-Thurs 11-8; Fri + Sat 11-9 (new, ind, back, CCG, RPG, GW, sci-fi/fantasy, anime, merch) (00)1 310 791 6227

Hawaii

Gecko Books & Comics, 3613 Waialae Avenue, Honolulu, 96816. Mon-Sun 9-9 (new, back, cards, toys, merch) (00)1 808 732 1292

Illinois

Comic Kingdom, 5941 W Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60634. (new, back) (00)1 773 545 2231

Louisiana

Comic Cosmos, 343 W Esplanade Avenue, Kenner, LA 70065. Mon-Thur 11.30-7, Fri-Sat 11-7.30, Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, CCG, toys, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

Crescent City Comics & Cards, 6111 Elysian Fields, New Orleans, LA 70122. Mon-Sat 11-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

More Fun Comics, 8200 Oak Street, New Orleans, LA 70118. Tues-Sat 11-7, Sun-Mon 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, merch, toys, CDs) (00)1 504 865 1800

Maine

Casablanca Comics, 151 Middle Street, Portland, ME 04101. Mon-Sat 10-9, Sun 12-7 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, merch, art) (00)1 207 780 1676

Casablanca Comics, 778 Roosevelt Trail, Windham, ME 04062. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, merch)(00)1 207 892 0056

Massachusetts

Comicopia, 464 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215. Mon-Sun 11-7 (Wed 10-8) (new, merch, CCG, manga, tpbk)(00)1 617 266 4266

Minnesota

Uncle Sven's Comic Shoppe, 1838 St Clair Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55105. Mon-Fri 3-6, Sat 11-4 (new, back, tpbk, gn, videos, action figures, CCG, RPG; est 19 years) (00)1 651 699 3409

New York State

Earthworld Comics, 327 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. Mon-Wed 11-6; Thur-Fri 11-7, Sat 11-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, ind, manga/anime, cards, merch) (00)1 518 465 5495

Forbidden Planet (FPI associate), 840 Broadway (at 13th St, NY 10003. Mon-Sat 10-10; Sun 12-10. (new, ind, back, RPG, merch, fantasy) (00)1 212 473 1576

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 4 West 33rd Street (opposite Empire State Building), NY 10001. Mon-Sat 9am-11pm; Sun 10-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 212 268 7088

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 325 New Dorp Lane, Staten Island, NY 10306. Mon-Sun; 12-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 718 351 6299

Midtown Comics, 200 West 40th Street, NY 10018 (00)1 212 302-8192

Ohio

The Laughing Ogre, 4258 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43214. Mon-Sat 10-9; Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 614 267 6473

Oklahoma

Time Warp, 588 SE Washington Street, Bartlesville, OK 74006 (new, back, cards, games, toys, CDs, sci-fi/fantasy) (00)1 918 335 3373

Pennsylvania

Comic Castle, 17 West Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA 17703 Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back) (00)1 717 322 8763

Golden Eagle, Berkshire Square, 1159 Berkshire Boulevard, Wyoming, PA 19610 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 376 8255

Golden Eagle, Fairgrounds Square Mall, Reading, PA 19605 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 921 3160

Tennessee

Collector's World, 1511 E Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37130. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, Hickory Plaza South Central, 5751 Nolensville Road, Nashville, TN 37211. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, 10820 Kingston Park #10, Knoxville, TN 37922 Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 423 675 6830

Collector's World, 4006 Granny White Park, Nashville, TN 37204 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 615 385 8136

Texas

Cliff's Comics, 2205 West Berry Street, Fort Worth, TX 76110. (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 817 927 7172

Collectible Heroes, 502 West Calton Road #307, Laredo, TX 78041. Mon-Wed 2-7.30; Thurs-Sat 11.30-7.30 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 956 791 8428

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, 616 West 34th Street, Austin, TX 78705 (new, back, games, anime, miniatures, prl) (00)1 512 454 2399

Virginia

Thore Comics, 3514 Oaklawn Boulevard, Hopewell, VA 23860. Mon-Sat 11-7, (new, back, Silver Age, sci-fi, M:TG, cards, vinyl)(00)1 804 458 9561

Trilogy Shop, 700 E Little Creek Road, Norfolk, VA 23518. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, merch) (00)1 757 587 2540

Wisconsin

Lost World of Wonders, 6713 West Oklahoma Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53219 (00)1 414 328 4651

Direct Market Retailers:

Comics International's Retail Index is THE international retail reference source for collectors, creators, publishers and journalists. Through it you can reach over 40,000 dedicated readers each issue for only £6 (US $10) a month! Bookable in six-issue blocks, retailers wishing to be included should send US $60 or £36 (UK: please add £6.30 to cover VAT @ 17.5%) plus shop information as detailed on previous page to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after various entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Retailers: International

Australia

Arcadia Unbound, 267 Forest Road, Hurstville, NSW 2220. Mon-Fri 10.30-7, Sat 10-4, Sun 12-3 (imp, back, manga, merch, CCG) (0061) 2 9585 1489

Books & Bounties/Comics Haven, 157a Charters Towers Road, Townsville, Queensland 4812. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG, CCG) (0061) 7 4779 2408

Fan Attic, 1st Floor, 91 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4002. Mon-Sun 9.30-5.30 (toys, Star Wars, sci-fi collectibles) (0061) 7 3221 1420

Kinda Lotsa Comics and Stuff, Shop 4, 503-511 King Street, Newtown, Sydney, NSW. Mon-Sat 10.30-7.30 (back, toys, merch)(0061) 2 9565 1054

Known Space Books, 1st Floor, 108 Gawler Place, Adelaide, SA 5000. Wed-Sat 12-6 (US/UK back) (0061) 8 8223 4304

Phantom Zone, 23 Anderson Street, Chatswood, NSW 2067. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9411 3709

Phantom Zone, 198 Mann Street, Gosford, NSW 2250 Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 43 25 4599

Phantom Zone, 207 George Street, Liverpool, NSW. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9601 2622

Phantom Zone, 285 Hunter Street, Newcastle, NSW. 2300. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4929 5717

Phantom Zone, 101a Argyle Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150 Mon-Fri 9-6; Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, books, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9891 1848

Phantom Zone, 268 Crown Street, Wollongong, NSW. 2500. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4228 7393

Austria

Comic Treff, Getreidemarkt 2-4, 1010 Vienna. Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 10-1 (imp, back, gn, CCG) (0043) 11 586 76 27

Belgium

Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels. (3 floors; imp, back, merch, US/French, STO, toys) (0032 2) 534 63 67 (fax 538 24 52)

Canada

Connection MD, 1539 Van Horne Avenue, Montreal, Quebec H2V 1L4. Mon-Sat 11-6 (new, merch, back, CCG) (00)1 514 948 2627

Dragon Lady Comics & Paper Nostalgia, 609 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1B5. (00)1 416 536 7460

Little Shop of Heroes, 160 Wallace Avenue, South Listowel, Ontario N4W 1X9 (00)1 519 291 2281

Silver Snail Comic Shop, 367 Queen Street West, Toronto M5V 2A4. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 11-8; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (00)1 416 593 0889

France

Album, 67 boulevard St Germain, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 53 10 00 60

Album, 6 rue Dante, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 43 54 67 09

Alpha Omega, 25 rue de la Clef, 59800 Lille. Mon 2.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 10.30-12.30/2.30-7.30 (imp, back, French, merch, trading/gaming cards, toys, RPG, Wars/Trek, B5, L5R) (0033) 320 319 375

Astro City, 22 rue Masurel, 59800 Lille. Mon 3-7.30; Tue-Sat 10-12.30, 2-7.30 (imp, manga, cards, merch, kits) (0033) 320 55 1010

Impact Comics, 64 rue Condorcet, 75009 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, merch, CCG)(0033) 42 80 30 10

L'Antre des Dragons, 56 rue de Loup, 33000 Bordeaux. Mon-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0033) 55 65 17378

Les Nageurs de Sable, 14 rue Courteline, 37058 Tours. Mon-Sat 11-1/2-7 (imp, back, cards, merch) (0033) 2 47 39 52 40

Pulps, 14 bld Morland, 75004 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, RPG) (0033) 1 42 72 55 25

Germany

Black Dog Comics, Rodenberg Strasse 9, 10439 Berlin. Mon-Fri 11-6.30, Sat 11-2 (imp, back, gn, t/cards) (0049) 30 4473 6486

Grober Unfug, Zossenerstrasse 32-33, 10961 Berlin. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0049) 30 6940 1490

Greece

Metropolis Comics, 94 Metropoleos St, 54622 Thessaloniki. Mon-Sat 10.30-3.30/7.30-11.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0030) 3 193 7775

Solaris, 6 Botasi Str, 10682, Athens. Mon-Sat 9-3.30/5-8.30 (imp, back, gn, merch) (0030) 1 384 1065

Holland

Henk Lie's Comics & Manga Store, Zeeduk 104, 1012BB Amsterdam. Mon-Sat 11-6; Sun 11-9 (imp, cards, merch, CCG) (0031) 20 421 3688

Hungary

Troll Kepregenyta'r, Terez Krt 13, Budapest 1067. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-1(imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0036) 1 322 6026

Irish Republic

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5-6 Crompton Quay, Dublin 2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 10-7); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, u/g, UK, gn, STO) (0035) 3167 10688

Sub-City Comics, 2 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3167 71902

Sub-City Comics, Unit 10, Level 1, Corbettcourt Centre, Eyre Square, Galway. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3915 65994

The 3rd Place, Crow Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3163 36965

Italy

Avalon, via Battisti 9/b, Bologna. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 051 234459

Avalon, via Pedriali 21, Forli. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 0543 33523

Avalon, via Settembrini 20, Milan. Mon 3.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 022 9400410

Avalon, via Foscolo 3, Padova. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7. (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch)(0039) 049 658290

Avalon, via Bissolati 68, Rome. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, cards, merch)

Avalon, via Magenta 0, Torino. Mon 3.30-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1, 2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 011 5617252

Forbidden Planet, via Pinerolo 11/15, 00182 Rome (imp, back, gn) (0039) 06 70305702

Il Marchio Giallo, via Deghi Scipioni 116, Rome. Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, merch, kits) (0039) 06 361 40 60

La Borsa del Fumetto, via Lecco 16, 20124 Milano. (imp, back, European and RPG, CCG) (0039) 11 5617252

Malaysia

The Mind Shop, Starhill Centre, Jalang Bukit Bintag, Kuala Lumpur. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 241 8871

The Mind Shop, S 58 Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 719 8246

The Mind Shop, Jin SS21/39, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 717 6602

New Zealand

Heroes For Sale, Level 2, 62 Queen St, Auckland. Mon-Sat 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g)(0064) 9 307 0682

Whitcoulls Corner Branch, 210 Queen Street, Private Bag 92098, Auckland. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, s-p, merch, ind, u/g) (0064) 9 356 5400 (fax: 9 356 5408)

Portugal

BdMania, Rua das Flores 67-71 R/C, 1200 Lisboa. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, CCG, merch) (00351) 21 346 1207

Interzona, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Loja 203, Rua Luis Veaga Lertao 98-120, 6050 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

Mundo Fantasma, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Rua Luis Veiga Leitao, 98/120, 1 Andar-Loja 203, 4050-399 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (US imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

South Africa

Euroniag, Shop 79A, East Rand Mall, Boksburg, Johannesburg. Mon-Sun 9-10 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0027) 11 896 3773

Zed Bree's Comic Universe, Mediterr-anean Building, 24 Tenth Ave, Edenvale 1610 Gauteng. 9.30-6 (imp, merch, gn, CCG) 002711 453 4215 (fax 453 4459)

Spain

Gigamesh, RDA San Pedro 53, 08010 Barcelona. Mon-Sat 10-1.30/4.30-8 (imp, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0034) 3 246 6359

Sweden

Comics Heaven, Stora Nygatan 23, 11127 Stockholm. Mon-Sat 10-6.30 (imp, back, gn, merch)(0046) 8 202516

Switzerland

Analph Comicladen Strassburgstr, 10 PO Box 1030, 8004 Zürich. (0041) 1 2419695 fax 1 2403442

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicate that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

International Festivals

A listing of the world's major comics festivals and conventions. For further information, call the organisers on the phone, fax or e-mail numbers provided. To view updates, contact them on their websites. Organisers' estimates of their previous year's attendance is given in brackets.

May 26-29: Switzerland

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE LA BANDE DESSINEE DE SIERRE. Organisers: Festival BD Sierre, CP 200, CH-3960 Sierre, Switzerland. 0041 27 455 90 43 fax: 0041 27 455 91 01. www.bdsierre.ch

June 9-12: Spain

THE 23RD BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL COMIC FESTIVAL. Organisers: Ficomic, Palau, 4 Baixos, 08002 Barcelona, Spain. 0034 93 301 23 69. www.ficomic.com

July 14-17: United States

COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL '05, San Diego, California. Organisers: Comic-Con International, PO Box 128458, San Diego, CA 92112-8458. 001 619 491 2475. www.comic-con.org

August 5-7: United States

WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO CON 2005. Organisers: Wizard World Chicago, 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920-2064. 001 608 226 0200. www.wizarduniverse.com

August 13-14: England

MEMORABILIA '05, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Memorabilia, Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa CV32 5SZ. 0870 224 8615. www.memorabilia.co.uk

August 26-28: Canada

CANADIAN NATIONAL COMIC BOOK EXPO 2005, Metro Toronto Convention Center, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. www.hobbystar.com

September 2-5: United States

DRAGON*CON 2005, Atlanta, Georgia. Organisers: Dragon*Con, PO Box 16459, Atlanta, GA 30321-9998. 001 770 909 0115. www.dragoncon.org

September 17-18: United States

BALTIMORE COMIC-CON, The Baltimore Convention Centre, One West Pratt Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201. 001 410 526 7410. www.comicon.com/baltimore

September 18-19: Finland

THE 19TH HELSINKI COMICS FESTIVAL. Organisers: The Finnish Comics Society, PL 927, 00101 Helsinki, Finland. 00358 50 407 0553. E-mail: tiina-riikka.rauhala@humak.edu

October 7-9: Norway

RAPTUS INTERNATIONAL COMICS FESTIVAL. Organisers: Raptus Bergen Comics Festival, Box 31, 5838 Bergen, Norway. 0047 986 71 710. www.raptus.no

October 12-13: Belgium

FACTS 2005, ICC Citadelpark, 9000 Gent. Organisers: Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels, Belgium. 0032 2 534 63 67. www.facts-convention.com

October 29-November 1: Italy

LUCCA COMICS & GAMES. Organisers: Lucca Comics & Games, Via della Cavallerizza 11, 55100 Lucca, Italy. 0039 583 48522. E-mail: info@luccacomicsandgames.com

November: Spain

EXPOCOMIC, Cuartel del Conde Duque (2003: 15,000). Organisers: Expocomic. 0034 915 159 622/646 728 623. E-mail: nasiopaperfora02@yahoo.com Date: TBA

November : England

COMIC EXPO, Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol. Organisers: Area 51 & Comics International. 01179 244655. E-mail: comicexpo@fsmail.net. Website: http://comicexpo.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk

Comics Publishers

North America

Unlike Europe, North American publishers invariably favour indie status to that of being labelled small press. This results in there being hundreds of comics publishers.

While circulations vary immensly, the following are the continent's major comicbook producers with titles printing between 5,000 and 150,000 copies. Contact telephone numbers are given where readily available. Website details can be found on the first page of the directory section.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, PO Box 1674 Station C, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2 (Cerebus)

ABSTRACT STUDIOS, PO Box 271487, Houston, TX 77277-1487 (Strangers in Paradise)

AC COMICS, PO Box 521216, Longwood, FL 32752-1216 (adventure titles, Golden Age superhero and western reprints)

ACCLAIM COMICS, 1 Acclaim Plaza, Glen Cove, NY 11542 (game tie-in adventure, Valiant superhero imprint. dormant)
(00)1 516 656 5000

AiT/PLANET LAR, 2034 47th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116 (graphic novels)
(00)1 415 504 7516

ALTERNATIVE COMICS, 503 North West 37th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32609-2204 (alternative titles and graphic novels)
(00)1 352 373 6336

AMERICAN MEDIA CONSUMER ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 600 East Coast Avenue, Lantana, Florida 33464 (Cracked)
(00)1 561 586 1111

ANTARCTIC PRESS, 7272 Wurzbach Parkway , Suite 204, San Antonio, Texas TX 78240 (adventure and US manga titles)

ARCHIE COMIC PUBLICATIONS, 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543 (humour titles)
(00)1 914 381 5155

AVATAR PRESS, 9 Triumph Drive, Urbana, IL 61802 (horror and fantasy titles) (00)1 217 384 2216

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT, 9744 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 402, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, CA 90212 (adventure titles; dormant)

BONGO ENTERTAINMENT, 1440 South Sepulveda Boulevard, 3rd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (The Simpsons and Futurama and related humour titles)
(00)1 310 966 6168

CALIBER COMICS, 225 North Sheldon Road, Plymouth, MI 48170 (black and white adventure titles)
(00)1 734 462 0457

CARTOON BOOKS, PO Box 16973, Columbus, OH43216 (Bone and related titles)

CROSSGEN ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 4023 Tampa Road, Suite 2400, Oldsmar, FL 34677 (fantasy and adventure titles)
(00)1 813 891 1702

CRUSADE FINE ARTS LTD, PO Box 845, Bayport, NY 11705 (fantasy and adventure)
(00)1 631 472 2866

DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 South East Main Street, Milwaukie, OR 97222 (adventure, licensed, US and Japanese manga)
(00)1 503 652 8815

DC COMICS, 1700 Broadway, NY 10019 (adventure and humour titles, MAD, Vertigo and Paradox Press imprints) (00)1 212 636 5400

DRAWN & QUARTERLY, PO Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, H2V 4SB, Canada (black and white biog)

DREAMWAVE PRODUCTIONS, 11 Allstate Parkway, Suite 200, Markham, Ontario L3R 9T8, Canada (adventure titles)

DYNAMIC FORCES, 155 Ninth Avenue, Suite E, Runnemede, NJ 08078 (variant editions and limited edition merchandise)
(00)1 856 312 1040

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 7563 Lake City Way North East, Seattle, Washington 98115 (adventure, biographical and Eros adult titles)
(00)1 206 524 1967

HARRIS COMICS, 1115 Broadway, 8th Floor, NY 10010 (Vampirella, fantasy and horror titles)
(00)1 212 807 7100

HEAVY METAL, 100 North Village Road, Suite 12, Rockville Center, NY 11570 (adult fantasy magazines and spin-off editions)

HUMANOIDS PUBLISHING, PO Box 931658, Hollywood, California CA 90093 (US-European editions)

IMAGE COMICS, 1071 North Batavia Street, Suite A, Orange, CA 92867 (adventure titles)
(00)1 714 2880200

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, 10th Floor, East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016 (adventure, humour and licensed titles) (00)1 212 5764000

NBM PUBLICATIONS, 185 Madison Avenue, Suite 1504, New York, NY 10016 (adult fantasy graphic novels and magazines)

ONI PRESS, 6336 South East Milwaukie Avenue, PMB 30, Portland, OR 97202 (adventure titles)

RADIO COMIX, 11765 West Avenue, PMB #117, San Antonio, TX 78216 (anthropomorphic manga) (00)1 210 3487195

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT, INC, PO Box 834, Stanhope, NJ 07802 (adult titles)

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS PUBLISHING, 577 South Market Street, San Jose, CA 95113 (black and white fantasy titles)
(00)1 9718929

TOP SHELF PRODUCTIONS, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282 (alternative and biographical titles) (00)1 770 4276395

TWOMORROWS PUBLISHING, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614 (comics feature and history magazines and books)
tel: (00)1 919 449 0344
fax: (00) 1 919 449 0327

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS, PO Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107 (English translated manga titles)

WaRP GRAPHICS, 2600 South Road, Suite 44/242, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (Elfquest and spin-off titles)

United Kingdom

The following are major UK comics and graphic novel publishers. If calling from outside of the UK, you should drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe and Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

AP COMICS, Suite 3, 7 French Row, St Albans, Herts AL3 5DU (adventure titles)

COM.X, The Dickens Inn, Kirk Street, London WC1N 2DG (adventure titles) 020 7831 7777

DC THOMSON, 2 Albert Square, Dundee DD1 9QJ (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals)

DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals)
020 7907 6000

EGMONT MAGAZINES LTD, Fourth Floor, 184-192 Drummond Street, London NW1 3HP (humour, licensed and pre-school titles)
020 7380 6430

HAMLYN BOOKS, 2-4 Heron Quays, London E14 4JB (graphic novels) 020 7531 8400

JOHN BROWN CITRUS PUBLISHING, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR (albums)
020 7565 3000

KNOCKABOUT COMICS, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (humour titles and underground comix and graphic novels)
020 8969 2945

PANINI COMICS (UK), Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5UJ (humour and adventure comics, Marvel licensed titles)
01892 500100

PULP THEATRE ENTERTAINMENT, Mermaid Court, 1 Mermaid House, London Bridge, London SE1 1HR (adventure titles) 020 7403 0378

REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS LTD, The Studio, Brewer Street, Oxford OX1 1QN (Judge Dredd The Megazine and 2000 AD)
01865 792201

THE REDAN COMPANY, Canon Court East, Abbey Lawn, Shrewsbury SY2 5DE (pre-school humour and licenced titles) 01743 364433

SAVOY BOOKS, 446 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 3BW (adult comics magazines, books and graphic novels)
0161 445 5771

TITAN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP LTD, Titan House, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (licensed graphic novels, books, magazines and comics)
020 7620 0200

France

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0033 becomes 011 33

ALBIN MICHEL, 22 rue Huyghens, 75014 Paris (albums)
(0033) 1 42 79 10 00

CASTERMAN, 36 rue du Chemin Vert, 75011, Paris (albums and manga titles)

DARGAUD, 15-27 rue Moussorgski, 75018 Paris (albums and manga titles)
tel: (0033) 1 53 26 32 32
fax: (0033) 1 53 26 32 00

DELCOURT, 54 rue d'Hauteville, 75010 Paris (albums and comics)
tel: (0033) 1 56 03 92 20
fax: (0033) 1 56 03 92 30

FLUIDE GLACIAL, 33 avenue du Main, BP 187, 75755 Paris (comics and albums)
(0033) 1 43 20 23 96

GLENAT, 31-33 rue Ernest Renan, 92130 Issy-Les-Moulineaux (albums and manga titles)
tel: (0033) 1 41 46 11 41
fax: (0033) 1 41 46 11 13

J'AI LU, 84 rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris (licenced Japanese manga titles) (0033) 1 44 39 34 70

LES HUMANOIDES ASSOCIES, 5 Passage Piver, 75011 Paris (albums)
tel: (0033) 1 49 29 88 88
fax: (0033) 1 49 29 88 89

SEMIC FRANCE, 44316 Nantes Cedex 03 (licenced comics and albums) (0033) 2 51 86 14 14

Italy

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0039 becomes 011 39

SERGIO BONELLI EDITORE, via Buonarroti 38, 20145 Milano (black and white comics)

CULT COMICS, viale Emilio Po' 380, 41100 Modena (Image and Dark Horse licensed titles)

MAGIC PRESS, Zona industriale via Ragusa 18, 00040 Pavona, Roma (Vertigo and WildStorm licensed titles)
(0039) 06 93020361

STAR COMICS, strada Selvette 1bis/1 Bosco (PG) (comics and black and white manga titles)

ASTORINA S.R.I., via Boccaccio 32, 20123 Milano (Diabolik original and reprint black and white)

KING COMICS, via Pinerolo 3, 00182 Roma (comics)

Spain

The following are the country's comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0034 becomes 011 34

NORMA EDITORAL, Fluvià 89, 08019 Barcelona (licensed DC and Dark Horse comics and albums)
0034 93 303 68 20

EDITORIAL PLANETA-DE AGOSTINI, SA, Aribau 185, 08021 Barcelona (licensed Dark Horse comics and albums)

TOUTAIN EDITOR, SA, Diagonal 325, E-08009 Barcelona (licensed Marvel, Dark Horse, Chaos!, Image and manga comics and albums) 0034 93 344 06 00

EDICIONES LA CÚPULA, Plaza de las Beatas 3, E-08003 Barcelona (adult comics and albums)
0034 32 682 8 05

Mail Order Specialists

Key to abbreviations used:

w/s	= wholesale available	CoBRA	= Comic Book Retailers' mail order protection scheme
dis	= bulk discount terms		
cat	= phone/write for catalogue	cc	= major credit cards accepted
s-cat	= sae for catalogue		
wants	= wants lists accepted	sae	= send stamped, addressed envelope with enquiry
s-wants	= sae with wants lists		

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Golden Age

Generally acknowledged as being published between 1938 and 1945, the first age of superhero comics, but herein designated to cover all pre-Silver Age American comics.

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High Street, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Silver Age

*Accepted as starting in 1955 with DC's superhero rebirth through **Detective Comics** #225 (introducing the Martian Manhunter) and **Showcase** #4 (introducing the Barry Allen Flash). Herein covering titles up to late 1960s.*

Colmore Comics & Collectibles, Vienna House, Starley Way, Birmingham B37 7GN (cat, cc, high grade, CGC) 0121 767 1803 fax: 0121 767 1910

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

East Coast Comics UK, 28 Acton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7LG (high grade, s-want, cc, sae) 01502 578385 (day) 560727 (eve)

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High Street, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Quicksilver Comics, PO Box 73, Ossett WF5 0YQ (s-cat, dis, wants, cc, CoBRA) 01924 270500 (fax: 270919)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax 680686)

Steve Rock Comics, 4 Orme Drive, Clevedon, Somerset BS21 7HD (Silver-Bronze, cat, wants, sae)

Post-Silver Age

Comics from 1970 to date: from Bronze Age , Marvel Age and Lead Age up to Platinum Age, Gimmick Age, Image Age and beyond. Historians will doubtless eventually decide on a name.

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Tarpaulin Books and Comics, 5 Oak Close, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3EZ (wants, s-cat) 01842 820139

Hot Comics

Current or key titles, first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble.

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN (wants, cc, dis) 020 8686 2400

Advance Imports

US comics are not generally available in UK newsagents, except for some sea-freight shipped low-cover price DCs and Marvels, and can only be found through specialists in the rest of the world. The following companies offer air-shipped copies from all of the major US publishers.

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 01206 561912

Chapter 12, 2 Prospect Place, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 1LE (wants, s-cat, CoBRA) 01843 860354

86th Floor Comics, 6 Shipley Common Lane, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8TR (dis, cat, cc) 0115 9443009

Forbidden Planet Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR (s-cat cc) 020 7420 3666

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 020 7636 1011

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Red Hot Comics, The Warehouse Block D Unit 8, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH (CoBRA, w/s, dis, wants, cc) tel/fax: 0141 630 0049

Limited Editions

Many high-profile miniseries and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n) 020 8446 3464

Trading Cards

Several mail order dealers carry a range of non-sports cards and related peripherals (files, folders, sleeves).

Beyond Comics, 76 Harlescott Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3BZ (s-cat, s-wants, sae, CoBRA) tel/fax: 020 7564 4213

John McDonald: Non-Sport Trading Cards, 20 Alder Grove, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire ML5 3PT (cat, wants) tel/fax: 01236 433358

Old British Titles

The popularity of old British comics continues to increase as more dealers expand into this area. The following specialise in such titles.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

30th Century Comics, 18 Lower Richmond Road, Putney, London SW15 1JP (cat, wants, CoBRA, cc) 020 8788 2052

Weird Fantasy, 19 Decoy Road, Ormesby, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 3LG (s-cat, s-wants, annuals specialist)

Merchandise

Comics, film and TV-related t-shirts, posters, video games, badges, toys, action figures, etc.

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton, Beds LU1 2TP. (specialists in Star Trek, Star Wars and sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Original Art

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available for collectors.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Peripherals

Acid-free protection for comics. Backing boards, protective bags, storage boxes, etc.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Just Comics, 65 Station Road, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs PE28 2TH (w/s only, CollectorLine™ distributor) 01487 824895 824896

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

General Fantasy

As well as comics old and new, some suppliers also provide catalogues of multi-media fantasy, covering TV, film, trading cards and toys.

Forbidden Planet Mail Order, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (cat) 020 7803 1900 (fax: 7803 1901)

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Manga Titles

English language translations of Japanese comics and US titles drawn in the Japanese style.

United Publications, 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent BR2 8HU (ind, back, cat, wants, cc) 020 8325 9507

Alternative & Biographical

The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life comicbooks and graphic novels (Fantagraphics, Maus, Crumb, Pekar...)

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (wants) 020 7636 1011

Knockabout Comics, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (w/s, s-cat, cc) 020 8969 2945 (fax: 8968 7614)

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY 0115 9508045

Comics Auctions

Accepting lots from the general public, comics auctions provide an alternative way for collectors to sell their valuable comics. The following accept items for sale, as well as providing regular catalogues for mail order bids.

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Distributors

Anybody considering opening a comics shop or becoming a mail order dealer can obtain further information about the supply of titles from the following who bulk air import US and European comics and related items on a weekly basis.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP (graphic novels, art books, comics, remainders, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8768 0022

Diamond Comic Distributors, 2nd Floor, Warton House, 150 High Street, London E15 2NP (US and European comics, cards and related items) 020 8536 5730 (fax: 8536 5736)

Red Route Distribution, Unit 24, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (US & European comics/ graphic novels, back-list specialists) 020 8960 5855

Turnaround Publisher Services, Unit 3, Olympia Trading Estate, Coburg Road, Wood Green, London N22 6TZ (graphic novels, art books, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8829 3000

Mail Order Dealers:

CI's Mail Order Index is the industry's most cost-effective and highly-targeted way to reach a huge dedicated audience in excess of 40,000 readers every month. It costs only £4 ($6 US) per entry per issue to appear and is bookable in advance as a six-issue series. Send pre-payment of £24/$36 (plus £4.20 VAT for UK advertisers) per category with your details to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Classified

Advertising terms and conditions

Whether for publication or not, all advertisements must be accompanied by full name, home address and daytime phone number of advertiser.

• All private classified Wants or Announcements ads (comics or card related items only) are free of charge. Maximum 50 words, they will be printed at the publisher's discretion when space permits. *(Only one advertisement can be submitted per letter/per issue so everybody gets a chance to fit in!)*

• FOR SALE ads (and dealer wants/announcements) are charged:
(i) General announcements: Stating no issue numbers, prices or titles. Per 50 words (or part thereof) ..... £5.00 ($7.50 US)
(ii) List ads: Including specific titles, issues and/or prices. Minimum charge, per 100 words (or part thereof) ..... £10.00 ($15.00 US)

Full payment, to Comics International, must accompany wordage.

CI Classified, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

For Sale

Comics, TV and film memorabilia and collectables for sale. Large selection of Marvel, DC and indies. Toys, original production animation cels, screen-used props, etc. We are a long-established London mart and NEC Memorabilia trader, now online at www.quitebizarre.co.uk. Not on the Internet? Call 020 8699 2196 with your wants.

DC comics collection for sale. Issues from the 1970s to the 1990s, all at really low prices. Includes many first issues (#1s) and annuals. Send an sae to Geoff Griffiths Comics, 27 Pennine View, Glasson Dock, Lancs LA2 0AS.

For sale: Five lots of comics and graphic novels – including Sin City trades, Sandman, Watchmen trades, Spawn, Conan (2004), Lobo and Hellraiser. Mostly mid- to late-'90s. Lot five is free (just pay for postage and packaging)! Lot 1: – 247 comics, serious boost to your collection. Lot 4 – six Sandman trades, **Sandman** #1 and #50 vfn-nm. Selling as four complete lots at £25 each (plus p&p). Averages 10p per comic, £2 per graphic novel/trade paperback. For a complete list e-mail sebastian379@fsmail.net or write to Sebastian, 6 Bannister Close, Langley, Slough SL3 7DP. Or call 07867 837298.

Bargain comics for sale: **Daredevil** #183-191, 200 Miller – £20; **Conan** #2 fn+ – £22; **Batman Family** #4 – £3.50; **Four Star Spectacular** #1 – £3.50; **Spectacular Spider-Man** #1 – £18; **Web of Spider-Man** #1 – £5; **Daredevil Man Without Fear** #1-5 – £7; **Amazing Spider-Man** #200 – £12. All vf/fn unless otherwise stated. All cents, unstamped copies. £85 the lot. Call Graeme on 01484 648788 (evenings) or 07788 747100.

For sale: **Spirit** (Kitchen Sink) – 14 issues. Call 028 9028 1163 for details.

Wanted

Advertisers are reminded that Wanted ads must be no longer than 50 words (including address), and only single insertion private advertisements can be published free of charge.

Wanted in any condition: **Comics Scene** 55 (with Batman Animated episode guide); **Amazing Heroes** 99, 181, 191 (please offer other issues with Batman, Superman or Spirit articles); **The Comics Journal** 46, 53, 73 and 89; **Best of DC Digest** 31, 60, 63, 66 and 71; Golden Age Batman pewter statue (1997). Send details and prices to Michael Connolly, 103 Ballylenaghan Heights, Belfast, BT8 6WJ.

Wanted: **Superman** Golden Press #11195. Desperately seeking a copy of this 144-page Superman anthology that was published in 1978. Does anyone have a spare copy or know anyone who has? Also: Dell Comics **The Monkees** #1-17, **Huckleberry Hound**, **Yogi Bear**, **The Flintstones**, **DC 100 Page Super Spectacular** #5, **Love Stories** (recent reprint OK). Most others. Gold Key **HR Pufnstuf** #1-8. John Balfour, Westerstraat 67-3, Amsterdam, Holland 1015 LW.

Wanted: **Marvel Rampage** #1, #2 and #3 with freebies, **Coven** volume 7 #3 and **Teen Titans** #1 (September 2003) and #4 (December 2003). Contact Pete Webb, 36 Church Street, Denby Village, Ripley DE5 8PH. Tel: 07745 831812.

From around the world I am trying to find ALL comics, books, magazines, articles, interviews, posters, postcards, displays, leaflets, catalogues and all other advertising materials, with art by Don Lawrence. I especially need **Daily Telegraph** (Januray 3rd 2004), **Mayfair** volume 39 #6 (May 2004), **Eagle Flies Again** #10 (Spring 2004) and **Contrivance** '89. Contact Rob van Haaren, Zandtong 2, 5658 AC Eindhoven, Netherlands.

Wanted: **Beware the Creeper** 1-6 (DC 1968/9) in good condition or reprint. Also Marvel colour reprints from the 1960s and 1970s (Marvel Tales, etc). Contact Robert Sweeney, 9d Woodside Crescent, Paisley PA1 2ND. Tel: 0141 889 4462. E-mail: rabbiejs2000@yahoo.co.uk.

Wanted: **Beware the Creeper** 1-6 (DC 1968/9) in good condition or reprint. Also Marvel colour reprints from the 1960s and 1970s (Marvel Tales, etc). Contact Robert Sweeney, 9d Woodside Crescent, Paisley PA1 2ND. Tel: 0141 889 4462. E-mail: rabbiejs2000@yahoo.co.uk.

Wanted: **The Original Astro Boy** 1-19 (now). 1970s UK weeklies: **Vulcan**, **Valiant** and **Lion** (any condition), **Strangehaven** 1-16, **Marvel's Greatest Comics** 35-96. Will pay cash or trade against items on my latest list. Contact Anthony Pick, 20 Grove Road, Hoylake, Wirral CH47 2DT.

Announcements

Fanzine and small press titles must not be offered for sale before being printed. To verify publication, a sample copy must be sent in along with the advertising copy (50 words max). Single bookings only, so everybody gets a chance!

Strap on you explosive bracelet and join Captain Boomerang and the gang as **Comics Retrospective** 18 opens the secret file on comicdom's unluckiest superteam, the Suicide Squad! It's 32 pages of intrigue and espionage, available now for £1.40 from Tony Ingram, 3 Lower Harlings, Shotley Gate, Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 1QE.

Pest Control 7 – "The best comic I'd read in 2004," said ***Silverbulletcomicbooks.com***. Join Airforce, 10, Penny DReadful and The Link on a new adventure into insanity, while the Brotherhood of Dread assassinates... well, that'd be telling! £1 from Grant Springford, 2 Cawston Court, Highland Road, Bromley BR1 4AF.

Worried about international terrorism? Read **Sgt. Mike Battle: The Greatest American Hero!** #6 and fondly recall the time when terrorist groups dressed in animal-themed costumes and fought Battle Force in Panda Strikes Back. Send £1 plus an sae to Graham Pearce, 42 Talbot Road, Penwortham, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9QX. www.sgtmikebattle.com

Free! **Must... Crush... Mankind!** comic. *Sgt. Doomrock*, *Kung-fu Clown*, *Cat & Dog* and many more feature in Lincolnshire Council-funded comic showcasing local talent. Varying styles, ages, etc. A one-off with limited stock remaining. Send an A4 sae to East Coast Comix, Flat B, 19 Welholme Road, Grimsby DN32 0DR.

Wanted: two pro-quality artists to work on projects for submission to publishers. Genres involved include western, sci-fi, superheroes, pirates and horror. Please send photocopies only to Terry Hooper, 203 Ashton Drive, Ashton Vale, Bristol BS3 2PY. Overseas artists also welcome!

Available now: *Planet of the Apes* fanzine **Simian Scrolls** featuring exclusive interviews with Mike Ploog and Jerry Pournelle. £3 (including p&p) from John Roche, Mediation House, 74 Stockwell Road, Pembroke Dock SA72 6TQ. E-mail: mail@mediationhuose.com.

Parataxis 5! Rereleased from Bionic Comics: the super-students of Parataxis face their greatest challenge yet as the mysterious Cyber-Sorceress tries to get them to dress up in spandex! **Parataxis** 5 from Bionic Comics, 94 Tippett Rise, Reading RG2 0DZ for the handsome sum of two first class stamps!

Short Stories, the ultimate stripzine is here! Featuring X-Men, Star Wars, Octobriana and more! With work by Stephen Prestwood, Craig John, Neil Edwards and John Short! Send cheques and postal orders for #2 to J.A. Short, 20 Grants Avenue, Bournemouth NH1 4NR.

Lightning in Paradise. New prose zine featuring Godpack's Blitziana fighting a global crisis. 50 pages. £3.50 including postage from Steve Nottingham, 37 Maxwell Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 1RG.

Comic Societies

Join The Eagle Society, dedicated to the memory of Britain's National Strip Cartoon Weekly – The Eagle 1950-1969. For just £18 per year (cheques to The Eagle Society) members receive our quarterly journal **Eagle Times**, as well as the chance to attend social gatherings and meet original Eagle contributors. Write to: Keith Howard, 25a Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2UA. E-mail: rsheaf@npg.org.uk

The Comics Creators Guild for industry veterans and aspiring professionals, the largest comics organisation in Europe. Monthly meetings, newsletter, exclusive publications, free legal advice, special discounts and more. For further info contact: Comics Creators Guild, 22 St James Mansions, West End Lane, West Hampstead, London NW6 2AA. www.comicscreators.org.uk

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It's been tried and tested for over 10 years and it's still going strong...

Comics International's *Classified* section has turned more than one £5 "For Sale" advertiser into a big-time full page dealer.

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Comic & Card Events

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2005
SUNDAY
JUNE
19

With over 160 tables, the National is the largest regular marketplace for comicbook and trading card collectors in the U.K. You will also find a whole range of related materials including TV, Film, Fantasy, Sci-fi and Toys from leading British & international dealers.
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FUTURE DATES: 19TH JUNE, 17TH JULY, 21ST AUGUST 2005

Dealers: for table availability phone 020 7476 6873

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Events

A summary of all the events advertised this issue

May

21/5 **Bedford:** Jamie Delano, Liam Sharp, David Lloyd and Alan Grant signing at Close Encounters ..... (p58)

28/5 **Newcastle:** Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p67)

29/5 **London:** The London ABC Show, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, Russell Square ..... (p47)

June

11/6 **Nottingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p67)

18/6 **Sheffield:** Comic Mart & Card Show, The Royal Society for the Blind, Main Hall, Mappin Street (off West Street) ..... (p67)

19/6 **London:** The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)

25/6 **Manchester:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p67)

26/6 **Liverpool:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p67)

July

2/7 **Leeds:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p67)

9/7 **Birmingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Aston University, Students' Guild Hall, Aston Triangle ..... (p67)

17/7 **London:** The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)

30/7 **Newcastle:** Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p67)

August

4-8/8 **Glasgow:** Interaction – The 63rd World Science Fiction Convention, SECC, Glasgow ..... (p4)

6/8 **Manchester:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p67)

20/8 **Sheffield:** Comic Mart & Card Show, The Royal Society for the Blind, Main Hall, Mappin Street (off West Street) ..... (p67)

21/8 **London:** The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)

27/8 **Nottingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p67)

September

3/9 **Leeds:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p67)

10/9 **Newcastle:** Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Ellison Place ..... (p67)

11/9 **London:** The London ABC Show, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, Russell Square ..... (p47)

17/9 **Manchester:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p67)

18/9 **Liverpool:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p67)

24/9 **Birmingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Aston University, Students' Guild Hall, Aston Triangle ..... (p67)

October

1/10 **Leeds:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p67)

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COMIC MARTS 2005
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TV/FILM MAGAZINES, POSTERS, BOOKS, BEANIE BABIES,
TOYS, MODELS, GAMES & ALL KINDS OF SCI-FI/FANTASY MATERIAL!

BIRMINGHAM	**SATURDAYS:** **JULY 9th, SEPTEMBER 24th** ASTON UNIVERSITY, STUDENTS' GUILD HALL, ASTON TRIANGLE, BIRMINGHAM
LEEDS	**SATURDAYS:** **JULY 2nd, SEPTEMBER 3rd, OCTOBER 1st** LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY, BRUNSWICK HALL, MERRION WAY
LIVERPOOL	**SUNDAY:** **JUNE 26th, SEPTEMBER 18th** GLADSTONE HOTEL, LORD NELSON STREET, LIVERPOOL
MANCHESTER	**SATURDAYS:** **JUNE 25th, AUGUST 6th, SEPTEMBER 17th** SACHAS HOTEL, TIB STREET, PICCADILLY, MANCHESTER
NEWCASTLE	**SATURDAYS:** **MAY 28th, JULY 30th, SEPTEMBER 10th** UNIVERSITY OF NORTHUMBRIA, STUDENTS' UNION BALLROOM, SANDYFORD ROAD, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
NOTTINGHAM	**SATURDAY:** **JUNE 11th, AUGUST 27th** VICTORIA LEISURE CENTRE, GEDLING STREET, NOTTINGHAM
SHEFFIELD	**SATURDAY:** **JUNE 18th, AUGUST 20th** THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND, MAIN HALL, MAPPIN STREET (off West Street), SHEFFIELD

DEALERS: WRITE FOR INFORMATION PACK

SEND SAE FOR FULL DETAILS:- GOLDEN ORBIT, 18 OAK TREE WAY, STRENSALL, YORK Y032 5TF

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